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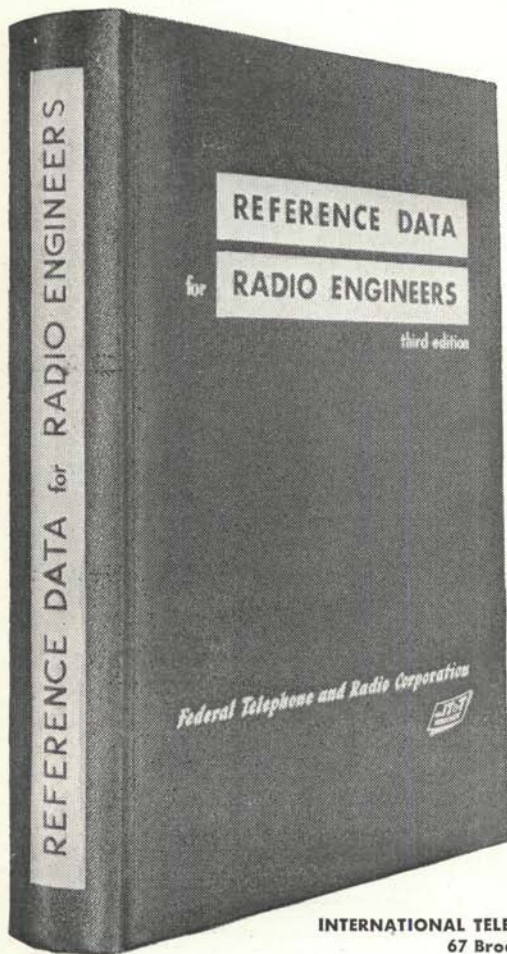
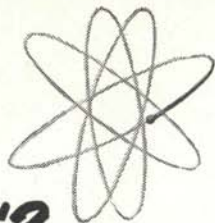
ALAN DEVOE ON HUNTING

UNTOLD FACTS IN
THE KOREAN DISASTER

EDITED BY

William Bradford Huie

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UNTOLD FACTS IN THE KOREAN DISASTER

BY WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE

(Note: In the preparation of this article the author had the assistance of Ralph Wallace, who made a special trip to Formosa and Tokyo; of Freda Utley, author of numerous books on the Orient; and of intelligence officers of the British, American, and Chinese Nationalist governments.)

WHEN SOME FUTURE Gibbon considers the present period in American history, he probably will record that in the year 1950 the quality of leadership in this nation reached a melancholy low. It was another of those tragic eras, he will write, when a vigorous, aspiring people found themselves defeated and despondent because they had neglected to seek out wise men to lead them.

Why, our Gibbon will ask, did the American people — a people who had known Washington and Hamilton and Madison and Lincoln, a common-sense people capable of giving substance to the Western ideal, a people who had survived Valley Forge and challenged the Rocky Mountains in covered

wagons, a people whose cause Tom Paine had said was the cause of mankind — why did such a people allow mediocre men to exercise power when the demand so obviously was for greatness?

The story of how we wasted the warm young blood of Tarawa and Iwo Jima, and allowed the Asian masses to be armed against us — this is a story which American parents must understand so that, if we have the chance, we can recount it to our children. It's a bitter story, for first it's the story of a few Americans who were traitors: men whose minds and bodies were actually in the employ of the enemy. It's a dispiriting story because it's the story of men who were heroic, of men who were honest and sincere and patriotic, of men who wanted to do good, but who lacked vision, who lost sight of the realities, who did the bidding of traitors, and who, therefore,

brought this nation and the cause of mankind to disaster. It isn't traitors who do the most mischief to free men; it's the dupes of traitors. Finally, it's a warning story, a story of a people who knew more than their leaders but who had delegated too much, who had allowed their leaders to operate in secrecy, who had neglected to impose those checks and balances which the fathers of our liberties warned us to maintain.

THE MERCURY, in subsequent issues, will document this story so that no reasoning man can misunderstand it. Here, we erect the skeleton on which to work, and we detail events which led to the military disaster in Korea.

The First Error

Every American schoolboy should be required to repeat: "The key to power in the Orient is Manchuria." Only Manchuria contains the minerals necessary to modern industrial and military power. Japan fought Russia for Manchurian concessions in 1904. Japan invaded and took Manchuria in 1931. It was power from Manchuria that enabled the Japanese to thrust southward in 1937 and then challenge the United States in 1941. We fought Japan, essentially, for Manchuria; it was

Manchuria that the blood of Tarawa and Iwo Jima should have purchased for the cause of mankind.

Roosevelt went to Yalta in February, 1945, to *persuade* the Russians to enter the war against Japan. The Russians had no intention of staying out of the war; they were just waiting until we had created the vacuum so that they could march in. And what did the Russians want? Concessions in Manchuria. But it was our men who had died for Manchuria. How could we bargain away Manchuria without breaking faith with our own dead?

Among the President's advisers at Yalta was Alger Hiss; and Hiss was there because a large group of men in our State Department *wanted* Russia to have Manchuria!

Also among the President's advisers were General Marshall and General MacArthur. (General MacArthur did not accompany the President to Yalta; but his advice was sought and given on concessions to Russia.) And here is a saddening fact: Both General Marshall and General MacArthur were willing to make concessions in Manchuria to "induce" Russia to enter the war. The generals were victims of the world's poorest intelligence service. By 1945 Japan was

on her knees, trying to make peace, yet General Marshall and General MacArthur both believed that Japan was still so strong that we should give away the prize for which we had fought. So it's a fact that General Marshall and General MacArthur urged Roosevelt to make the same concessions to Russia which Hiss and the State Department traitors-and-fools were urging him to make.

Those who doubt that MacArthur could make such an error will have their evidence when the papers of James Forrestal are published. For here is another fact: Forrestal, alone among the major figures in our government, opposed making any concession to get Russia into the war against Japan.

To know that Forrestal took this position — he was also supported by George F. Kennan in the State Department and by Admiral William D. Leahy — is important to us now: it reassures us that our nation has not ceased to produce great men of vision; we have ceased placing them in positions of power.

The Fatal Error

The error at Yalta, while serious, was not beyond correction in 1946. The Russians had their concessions in Manchuria — railroads and ports; they had

looted its industries; but the Chinese Nationalist government was struggling to exercise control and Russia was pledged to respect this control. There were no Chinese Communists in Manchuria: the Japs had kept them out.

It was then that Truman and Marshall, under the influence of the State Department knaves-and-fools, made the fatal error. Instead of sending Marshall to China with instructions to aid Chiang Kai-shek in the destruction of the Chinese Communists, Truman sent Marshall with instructions to compel Chiang Kai-shek to *embrace the Communists!*

The Events of 1950

In February, 1950, a treaty and a series of agreements were signed by the Russian and Chinese Communist governments. Our government should have learned the terms of the pact. From its actions, apparently, it did not: our intelligence is so incompetent. Here, published for the first time, are the more important terms:

1. Russia was to send 45,100 Soviet personnel to China, of which twelve thousand were to be assigned to the army, eight thousand to the air force, three thousand to the Navy; five thousand to the "political

sphere;" twelve thousand to "industrial development;" and five thousand to "cultural and educational fields." Each company in the Chinese army was to have at least one Russian "political adviser," with the number of advisers being multiplied in the higher echelons.

2. All mineral, oil, forestry and food resources of China were to be developed by joint commissions of Russians and Chinese.

3. "To ensure the solidarity of the ruling position of the laboring classes" China and Russia would cooperate fully in the field of "economics and culture." (Portraits of Lenin and Stalin now hang in every Chinese barracks and mess hall; all troops sing the *Internationale*; all Chinese teachers must take a course in Soviet culture and aspirations; and Chinese school books are being altered to tell the Russian story.)

4. There was to be "complete cooperation between all persons of both countries connected with security." Under this term the Russians immediately installed in the Chinese army the Russian system of compartmentation of secrets; and this system defies the best intelligence agents.

5. "To help solve the economic difficulties of the Chinese" Russia agreed to "employ

Chinese jobless laborers." This is the vicious term which enables the Chinese Reds to send to Russia all the "political undesirables" — and it enables Russia to recruit slave laborers from the inexhaustible Chinese pool. Already, under this term, more than five hundred thousand Chinese have been sent to Russia. When the 26th and 27th Chinese Communist armies rebelled in South China last year, the armies were broken up and the men sent to Siberian labor camps.

6. "To meet Soviet emergency needs on the European front in a future war," the People's Government of China agreed to send "laborers and expeditionary forces" to serve under the Soviet High Command.

On matters particularly concerning the Chinese armed forces here were the terms of the Moscow and Harbin agreements:

a. The Chinese army was to consist of 5,700,000 men.

b. Russia was to be in control of training the Chinese army.

c. Russia was to control: aviation, navy, radar, communications and meteorology.

d. Russia was to begin the immediate training and equipping of fifty Chinese divisions.

e. Russia was to transfer to China: six hundred war planes and all the Japanese naval craft awarded to Russia at the end

of World War II. Russia was also to send several regiments of anti-aircraft troops to protect the Chinese airfields.

f. Russia and China agreed to "the intensive development of an International Army Corps with soldiers of all Asiatic nations serving in the ranks."

g. Russia was given twelve air bases in China, from Hami to Shanghai. Russia was also given naval bases at Port Arthur, Dairen, Yongkow, Ching-Hwang-Lao, Hu-Lu-Tao, Taku, Chefoo, Tsingtao and Lien-Yung-Kang.

h. China and Russia agreed to operate in "all future military operations under a joint Sino-Soviet staff."

After the signing of this pact there was the usual all-night banquet in the Kremlin. Stalin's principal toast to the Chinese was this: "To your victory in all Asia." And Mao replied: "To world victory of Communism in 1952."

NOW HERE IS an amazing situation — a situation which should be of concern to every American. The signing of these agreements was one of the most significant events of our time. It meant, in effect, that a five-million-man Chinese army had been assimilated into the Russian army. Russia had ac-

complished what American diplomacy, in the interest of mankind, should have prevented.

But were the American people warned of this pact? Were the terms of the pact published so that we could prepare accordingly? The tragic fact is this: there is reason to believe that the United States government itself *did not know the terms of the agreements*, much less understand their significance!

Most Americans, no doubt, assume that our government, being reasonably intelligent, maintains agents in China to gather information on the activities of the Chinese government. Here is the truth: In the first six months of 1950 our government did not have a single agent in Peiping or in all of China!

The Chinese Nationalists, being enemies of the Chinese Communists, do maintain an excellent espionage network in China. So most Americans, no doubt, assume that our government maintains expert liaison with Chinese Nationalist intelligence. Here is the truth: For a period of nine months before June 15, 1950, not a single American intelligence officer had visited the headquarters of Chinese Nationalist intelligence on Formosa.

Why? Because our State Department was clearing the ground for the recognition of

the Chinese Communist government; and there was a State Department directive against our intelligence officers going to Formosa!

And here is one more point. Most Americans have been led to believe that our Central Intelligence Agency is of some importance. If that were so, in 1950, surely it would have been employing expert Chinese agents. The truth is this: During 1950 what few Chinese were employed by the CIA were first screened by John Davies, of the State Department, and Mr. Davies has written: "The destiny of China belongs to the Communists."

Since, however, our government does formally recognize the Chinese Nationalist government as the legal government of China, there is a Chinese embassy in Washington, and Chinese intelligence is submitted both to the Pentagon and to the State Department. The evaluation of the intelligence is left to Americans.

But here is the situation regarding the Chinese Nationalists in Washington. The head of our Defense Department is General Marshall. The Chinese Nationalists distrust General Marshall; they blame him for their defeat in China.

At the State Department, Ach-

eson, Jessup, John Davies, Hiss — they have all believed that "the destiny of China lies with the Communists." * The State Department issued the directive against American intelligence officers consulting on Formosa with Chinese Nationalist intelligence. So how welcome are the reports of Chinese Nationalist intelligence at our State Department?

In May, 1950 — three months after the signing of the Sino-Soviet pacts, and many months after the Russians had begun re-training and re-equipping the Chinese Red armies — our press and our State Department were telling Americans that "Mao is developing into another Tito;" that "Red China's interests must conflict with those of Russia;" that "Russia cannot influence China's destiny."

HERE IS A sequence of facts which should demonstrate to any reasonable American the appalling inadequacy of our leadership.

1. The Sino-Soviet agreements were signed in February and March, 1950. Our government either didn't know the terms, or it didn't act accordingly.

2. In April, 1950, the Chinese

* State Department White Paper on China p. 573.

Red army of General Lin Piao captured the iron-rich island of Hainan, which is off the southernmost coast of China.

3. In May, 1950, Lin Piao's troops began transferring from the far south of China to the far north — to Manchuria. Chinese Nationalist intelligence transmitted this information to the Pentagon and to the State Department. The intelligence transmittal also contained this information about Lin Piao: he is the youngest and ablest of the Chinese Red field commanders. His field army of about 1,500,000 men was the first to be re-equipped and re-trained under the Sino-Soviet pact. Lin Piao is the protegee of Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, and is regarded by the Russians as completely trustworthy.

The jurisdiction of Lin Piao's field army is southern China; it had just concluded the occupation of Hainan. Now why, in May, 1950, would Lin Piao's army start moving *all the way across China* to Manchuria?

Chinese Nationalist intelligence reported to the Pentagon in May, 1950, that Lin Piao's movement to Manchuria could indicate only one thing: an imminent attack on South Korea.

4. Meanwhile, our government had decided on a policy for South Korea: we had with-

drawn our arms; if it were attacked we would not defend it. *No American military man believed that we could successfully defend South Korea.*

5. On June 25, 1950, there was an invasion of South Korea, and at 6:00 p.m. on this date it was the policy of the United States not to intervene. *No military man believed that we should intervene.* But between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m., the President, in conference with Dean Acheson and General Marshall, decided on a policy of intervention.

6. The divisions which led the "North Korean" attack on the South Koreans were divisions which had been a part of Lin Piao's army. The Korean war, from the beginning, was a war between the United States and South Korea, on the one side, and Russia and Red China on the other. "North Korean" troops were employed during the period when no other troops seemed necessary.

7. During July and August of 1950 Chinese Nationalist intelligence informed the Pentagon and the State Department that more Chinese Red divisions were pouring into Manchuria. And what else could this possibly mean except that these troops were to be employed, if necessary, in Korea?

8. To this last question our

government came up with the most amazing answer of all. Every American should memorize this fact:

The American people were told by their government that movement of Lin Piao's troops into Manchuria was a hopeful sign. It was hopeful because it indicated that China was stiffening her resistance to Russia!

9. Late in October, 1950, just before the elections, the President flew to Wake Island to confer with General MacArthur. The President took along as his adviser, Dr. Philip Jessup. Dr. Jessup subscribes to the view that the future of China lies with the Communists; his advice has helped bring this country to disaster. And at Wake it was decided by MacArthur, Jessup, and Truman that our troops could push to the Manchuria border in safety because, obviously, the Chinese Communists would not intervene.

10. Early in November, 1950, intelligence was transmitted to our government to this effect: the troops opposing the United Nations armies in North Korea are not "North Koreans;" they are troops of the International Army Corps of Russia and China. The whole invasion of South Korea was planned by the Sino-Soviet staff; Red China has been in the war from the

beginning, and will commit whatever troops are necessary to drive the Americans from Korea.

11. On November 24, 1950, General MacArthur visited the front lines in Korea and launched his home-for-Christmas invasion. He said that he was now opposed by only "scattered remnants" of a defeated enemy.

12. On November 26, 1950, disaster was in the making, and MacArthur announced that "more than a million" Red Chinese troops were *already in Korea*.

Now the questions which every American citizen has the right to ask are these: If MacArthur knows the Orient, why did he completely misunderstand the character of the Korean war? Why was he so confident that the Chinese Reds would not enter a war which they had planned and manipulated from the beginning? If, when he launched his home-for-Christmas offensive, he knew that he was confronted by a million Red troops in Korea, why did he spread out his army in an insane offensive? And if he didn't know that "Chinese hordes" of a million men were immediately in front of him, why didn't he? Has our intelligence sunk to so low a state that even in the field, and with

complete command of the air, we can't locate a million men in front of our armies?

President, Acheson, Marshall, and MacArthur have given this nation the sorriest military leadership in its history.

In the Korean debacle the

These Americans were wrong . . .

President Harry S. Truman (December 15, 1945): "The United States . . . believes that peace, unity, and democratic reform in China will be furthered if the basis of [the National Government of China] is broadened to include other political elements [i.e., the Chinese Communists] in the country. . . .

General George C. Marshall (January 7, 1947): "It has appeared to me that there is a definite liberal group among the Communists . . . men who would put the interest of the Chinese people above ruthless measures to establish a Communist ideology in the immediate future."

Dean Acheson (March 20, 1947): "The Chinese Government is not . . . approaching collapse. It is not threatened by defeat by the Communists. The war with the Communists is going on much as it has for the last twenty years."

Edgar Snow, in *THE NATION* (February 17, 1945): "The Chinese Communists and their leader, Mao Tse-Tung, happen to have renounced years ago now, any intention of establishing Communism in China in the near future."

Owen Lattimore (in *Solution in Asia*, 1945): "Cooperation with Russia in strengthening China will make it easier to cooperate with Russia in many other ways. . . . We must in postwar United Nations policy planning bring the Russians all the way down to colonial Asia."

These Americans were right . . .

General Albert C. Wedemeyer (in his Report on China, 1947): "The Chinese Communists are self-professed Communists bound ideologically to the Soviet Union. They proclaim as their eventual aim the establishment of a commu-

nist state in China . . . China dominated by Chinese Communists would be inimical to the interests of the United States. . . . Removal of American assistance, without removal of Soviet assistance, would certainly lay the country open to eventual Communist domination."

General Douglas MacArthur (1947): "Our failure to help the Government of China effectively at the end of the war, with its otherwise insuperable problems, particularly the Communist rebellion, will turn out, I fear, to be the single greatest blunder in the history of the United States."

Thomas E. Dewey (November 24, 1947): "The present struggle [in China] is a war of conquest under the leadership of a small group of avowed Chinese Communists who are serving the purposes of Soviet imperialism."

The Hon. Walter H. Judd (March 15, 1945): "I am convinced the primary allegiance of the Chinese Communists is to Russia . . . and their purpose is to make Russia overwhelmingly the strongest power in Asia."

William C. Bullitt (October 13, 1947, *LIFE Magazine*): "Soviet imperialism . . . using the Chinese Communists as instruments of Soviet power politics, is striving to reduce China to the status of a satellite of the Soviet Union. . . . In our own self-defense, therefore, we must act to prevent Soviet domination of China and the eventual mobilization of Chinese manpower for war against us."

Major General Claire Lee Chennault (1949): "There are still many battles that cannot be avoided. The most critical of these now is to prevent the Communists from organizing the vast and rich land mass of China under their whip and turning its weight against us and the other free peoples of the world."

Alan Devoe on Hunting

ONE LATE autumn day a friend of mine was driving slowly through a little dirt back-road, possessing his soul in peace and having a look at the golden autumnal glory of things. There were numbers of fat and frisky squirrels to be watched and enjoyed, wood-smoke and apples to be smelled, and the tonic *beadle-beadle!* of blue jays to be heard ringing through the November oak woods. A sweet day, this; and my old friend, having that disposition to appreciate the earth and be glad for it — which is in theory the disposition of us all — was of a mind to take the never-returning splendor of it to his heart. What he took, instead, was a rifle bullet. It came from nowhere in particular — *crack! crump!* — through the car window. It ended his day, and days.

He had neglected, being a meditative fellow notoriously

cut off from wholesome and red-blooded concerns, to notice that the hunting season was under way. He had not realized that that time was here when in rural regions safety is to be secured only by huddling in the cellar, and when a reasonably decent-minded philosopher, having sought that sanctuary, may test his self-control by pondering upon what is going on outdoors and then seeing whether he can retain his supper.

A less abstracted man, to be sure, could scarcely have failed to notice the evidences of the fall festival outdoors. The indications, after all, are abundant. There is the sudden increase, for instance, in stray cattle. Their puzzled wanderings around the highways let us know of the cutting of stock-fences, by tool-bearing huntsmen who have realized it is much easier to sever a fence than to break it down by

climbing over it or to bash it in, say, by carrying a battering ram. Or again, there are the characteristic vestigial posters to be seen on trees. It is not ordinarily possible to read their lettering, for this has usually been obscured or obliterated by a blast of shot; but even the moderately alert and knowledgeable of us are aware of what such a poster *has* said. It has said POSTED; and it has been tacked to its tree, with painstaking labor, by some simple-hearted citizen in anticipation of the hunting season. The obliteration of the lettering by shell-fire lets us know that that season, in all its target-loving and pranksome exuberance, has in fact begun. Or, again and yet again, what averagely alert observer can miss the emptied whiskey-bottles, strewn colorfully along the forest-paths where ordinarily are found only the cleft imprints of the hoofs of deer? Or who, not already deaf, can fail to hear the bangs of firing, the whistlings of trajectory, that in this season become the musics of Arcady? What one of us, scanning the newspaper, can miss the spate of annual headlines: HUNTER ACCIDENTALLY KILLS PAL; THOUGHT HE WAS PORCUPINE?

That friend of mine who is gone, I am afraid, failed in alertness. In any case, perhaps, he

was not a man fulfilling the stern norm we call "adjustment to cultural environment." He had a great love for animals and found a refreshment in watching them alive, in the exercise of their powers; and he had never got it through his head, somehow, that it is a manlier thing and more character-building to enjoy their deaths. His old car, even before the bullet smashed through it, was a seedy sort of affair. At the end of its hood there was only a radiator cap. Never, in a moment of red-blooded enjoyment of the outdoors, had he thought to hack off the ringed tail of a killed raccoon or even the plummy little tail of a slaughtered squirrel and tie it there in token of his strength. He was a kind of namby-pamby man, I guess. Perhaps it is as well that he has left.

IT CAN BE said, of course, that not all hunters, not in fact more than a tiny if conspicuous minority, engage in cutting fences, littering the clean green woods with whiskey bottles, peppering away at POSTED signs, or firing their deadly weapons across roads. It can be said that no profession or pastime ought to be judged by what oafs may infest it. Do we condemn medicine because, alas, there are some

M. D.'s glad and eager to perform an eight-dollar abortion in an alley? When we speak of that noble calling, the law, what we have in mind is Oliver Wendell Holmes, not the shyster pattering after the ambulance.

It can be said that most hunters observe regulations. It can be argued that, but for hunting, some kinds of animals might become over-numerous. It can be said that a hunter is helping rid the land of many creatures which are only vermin — such ones as foxes, crows, woodchucks and the like — and that sportsmen, by the fees they pay for licenses and the contributions they make to sportsmen's organizations, help in a wildlife restoration that matches or over-matches their wildlife reduction. Hunting, it can be said, is after all a thing long respected and of ancient lineage, going right back to the dawn-days of humanity and an instinct so primary as to stand as sacred. It can be held that a hunter takes his joy, not, as sentimentalists might suppose, from spilling blood, ending life, and asserting power by that means, but rather from experiences to which any killing is merely incidental: the sight and scent and relished excellence of the outdoors, the chance to watch beasts and birds at close range, the wholesome charm of

exercise and recreation and camaraderie. It can be pointed out that an esteem for hunting is as general as an esteem for baseball, for the flag, for the cross, and for mother.

All these things can be said. *Can* be said? They have been said hundreds, thousands, probably millions of times. The pages of hunting magazines burst with them, in an over-and-over repetition so continuous and strenuous that it needs less than Shakespearian insight to be struck by the muchness of the protesting.

While they can be said, they can also be questioned, by an occasional abnormal logician. *Is* hunting for sport a pastime from primitive times? Or is it rather the fact, as some scholarly anthropology may suggest, that primitive men went hunting for the stern and sole purpose of getting something to put in their bellies, and that when they did bring down a bear or bison they were apt to be so overcome by the enormity of their assault upon the animal brotherhood that they hastened to perform rites of sad apology to the victim and yet more poignant rites of propitiation to Great Power Who Is Life-giver of All?

Are foxes vermin? There are several ecological scientists who

have examined briefly into the matter — say for twenty or thirty years — and think not. *Is it the love of the glory of outdoors, and not of the killing, that sends the huntsman forth? If it is, why in the holy name of sanity does he burden himself with that long, heavy, unnecessary object that has a butt at one end and is likely, if he isn't careful, to go bang?* It's just the fun of exercising the *skill* of shooting, is it? Dr. Roy Abbott, a biologist, has remarked that no living bird or beast calls forth this skill more prettily than does a beer-can tossed in the air.

AT THIS LEVEL, in these terms, a dust-up over hunting can of course go on forever. It is the function of the raised dust to obscure the matter centrally at issue. That issue is this:

Is the sport of hunting, simply as such, a man-worthy thing or isn't it? Let it be supposed that all hunters obey all regulations. Let it be supposed that no whiskey-bottle is dropped to pollute any glen or dingle, no fence is broken, no fawn is shot, no forest is set afire, no robins are massacred in mistake for pheasants and no deer-hunters in mistake for porcupines (or possibly chipmunks), and no meditative philosopher, out to enjoy the loveliness of autumn, is ever

plugged through the pericardium. The question persists: Is it a spectacle of manhood (which is to say of our distinctive humanness), when on a bracing morning we look out upon the autumn, draw an exhilarating breath, and cry "What a glorious day! How golden the light of the sun, how merry the caperings of creatures! *Gloria in excelsis Deo!* I will go out and kill something."?

We're a long, long way from Eden, our species. The ideal man that we once were, in the Christian view, or the ideal man, in any view, that it is supposed to be our dedicated dream to become . . . that ideal is very far, very difficult, and needs our utmost trying. Do we draw the closer to it when for ten or eleven months of the year we pay no attention at all to the garden of the creation into which we have been invited, and when for the remaining month or two we are concerned to draw what blood we can, to put a stop to what fellow-lives we can, and to make a smear of blood and guts where there had been living squirrels, living grouse, living deer enjoying the sometime sanctuary of the green places? *Manly?* It doesn't take a man to kill something. Any animal can do that. What it takes a *man* to do — and he is

the only creature on all the earth that can do it — is to feel pity and show mercy, to feel gratitude for aliveness and give the thanks of restraint, to be so very strong, in his manhood, that he can be gentle.

Well?

If we put aside all our fear of being thought sissies, if we disregard the virile chest-thwackings of those weak and unfulfilled ones who must go killing because only in a bloody gunmanship can they assert and reassure themselves, if we just drop all the long, long pretence, and look with a grave candor into the heart of us . . . do we hesitate over an answer? We don't, I think.

In the history of our kind, we have abandoned a series of ugly pretendings. We used to pretend we thought it was perfectly all right to chop off a child's hand for petty theft. We went about slapping each other heartily on the back and assuring each other that of course it was. We used to join together in a genial general howl at the amphitheatre, sharing the wholesome entertainment of watching lions disembowel an old lady. *Corking* sport! Who but a dangerous radical or a sickly mother's-boy could deny it? We used to pretend it was fun watching the hangings, and we smothered

successfully for ages any small inner voice whispering to us that perhaps really, deep down inside, it did make us feel sort of sick and funny and ashamed when the four flogged horses dashed off in four directions and ripped apart the living body of a man being drawn and quartered.

There remains the pretending about hunting to be abandoned. The time will come when it will be. ('What! Abandon the splendid manly practice of pitting bears against dogs in an arena as Sabbath diversion? Why, such a time will *never* come, Sir!')

The end of hunting, of course, won't come soon. Neither did the end of bear-baiting, nor of boiling in oil, nor of slavery. Right up to our fathers' day we were shooting robins and bobolinks and hanging them up in strings in the market-place at ten cents a string. Still, the time will come. If it doesn't, it will be for only one reason. It has at last become possible for us — with an atom bomb in our one hand, a hydrogen bomb in our other — to delay a little *too* long our turning from barbarity and our facing of the quiet truths deep in our hearts. After all, with these new equipments, even just a minute or two too long can make quite a difference. We may all have disappeared.

The Mystery Bus Ride

by Robert Lowry

BEHIND ME, this misty evening in Times Square, Hollywood showed more savagery in its signs than a whole nation of Indians, and tom-toms kept the beat in the hostess halls and nightclubs, and the novelty shops offered rubber masks for those of us who lacked faces or needed a change.

I had a face, but I needed a change.

I could go home or I could go forward or I could turn back into the spangled square, but then I saw the bus station, a few doors up 41st, and I went toward it hopefully, just as if I really believed that a bus could make anything except a round journey, with your same old self meeting you at the end of the ride.

The mystery was there waiting.

It was a well-advertised mystery. An enormous sign plastered

across the station window made the offer:

?? Wander Ye Into the Unknown ??

Under this big red letters shouted:

?? THE MYSTERY BUS RIDE ??

Where? What? How? Starts every Saturday evening at 8.15. \$1.90 per person, including tax. Wander Ye Into the Unknown.

Inside, behind the sign, was the sorriest, scabbiest, drabbest, dullest little hole-in-the-wall of a bus station in the whole U.S.A. — lined with scarred brown coin lockers, outfitted with a couple of wooden benches, littered with candy wrappers, ticket stubs, and cigarette butts. Five people, all of them sad but only one of them old, sat on the benches, ready to go back to Hackensack or wherever, and two other people, a guy and his girl, gurgled and giggled while they waited for the ticket seller to show his face. I lined up behind them.

"I would like to wander into that unknown you've got advertised." I said to the horn-rimmed glasses in which the ticket seller masked himself.

"What's that?"

"Mystery bus ride," I said, and his eyes followed my finger to the sign on the window. "It says right there."

"One-ninety," he said, and threw me a yellow ticket.

"What's the deal?"

"That's the mystery," he answered, and was already looking impatiently over my shoulder at a couple of people behind me. "They're loading now — right, Charlie?"

A voice named Charlie said "Right" from the office behind him. So I went out to the loading lot.

THE BUS was a big red one, marked SPECIAL, shiny with the light rain that had started. Some of the wanderers into the unknown were already loaded, and looking nervously out of the windows. Others were getting on now. The male of the gurgling couple I'd seen inside was just handing his tickets to the driver. He was serious now. He was also very young.

I knew it was a mistake the moment I got on and looked down the aisle at the faces. Christ, it's a sponsored necking party, I thought. They're all couples. They all brought their unknown with them. (But there were two old gray-haired aunts, sitting primly and silently in a front seat. That helped a lot.) I folded myself into a seat anyhow — number two behind the aunts.

The rain had started harder.

"Okay, Artie, close that door and leave us wander."

"Off we go into the wild blue wander."

"I want to know the mystery. How long we have to wait?"

They were the early boy-birds and girl-birds in the back of the bus: they had already gotten acquainted with Artie. Under his worn bus-driver's cap, he had a pock-marked, beef-red, kiddie's face, out of which looked the flame-bright eyes of a man who has learned his kidding in a bar. As the passengers shouted at him, he fiddled elaborately with his tickets. Ignoring them was part of the gag. At last he looked up, put his big hands on his hips, and stared hard straight down the aisle at the rear window. One full minute of silence. After which he nodded, slowly and wisely.

"Looks like I'm gonna have trouble with some of youse."

He nodded a few more times, then strode back through the bus and threw himself on an empty seat in the rear — "I don't know what you people are gonna do, but I'm gonna go to sleep," Artie announced. He began to snore. He outsnored the laughs he got, and retreated finally to the front of the bus, where a couple more people were waiting to give him their tickets.

Behind me a snub-nosed girl called, "I notice Artie never for-

gets to get those tickets." But she had overstepped the bounds which Artie set for the game: he didn't answer. Instead he said something to a fat, middle-aged woman with dyed red hair who sat directly behind the driver's seat. She poked around in a cigar box which she held on her lap, and slipped him something. She was, it was obvious, no wanderer into the unknown, but Artie's prop woman, and probably his girl.

"I wish to make an announcement," Artie said. "If anybody has to go, why, just ask me and I'll let you use this."

Between two blunt fingers he held up a tiny wooden toilet.

"Number One, Artie!" "Number Two, Artie!" "Hurry, Artie!" some of the guys called, like kids in grade school. There was a giggle from the girls.

Artie shoved his cap to the back of his head. "I wish to make another announcement."

"Quiet, please!" somebody yelled. "Hear ye! Hear ye!" somebody else yelled. "Down in front!" the baby-faced boy across the aisle from me yelled. He was hugging a little blonde.

Artie gave them the long silence. Suddenly he rushed down the aisle, stretched out in the empty seat and began to snore again. He awoke to say, "Tell me when youse get there."

ARTIE finally got up and made his announcement. Although nobody had said anything about where we were going, Artie claimed that all around him he was hearing remarks about our destination. "All I got to say is, anybody says he knows where this trip ends is lying and I mean it. I don't know, so how could any of youse know? Here I got in my hand eight envelopes. Now I am going to pass these out to some of these beautiful girls I see before me here" (he got a laugh) "and we will stop wherever it says for us to stop and then we will read the next one and find out where that one tells us to go. Everybody got that clear in their heads?"

He went down the aisle distributing the envelopes, stopping here and there in great silence while he shook his head at somebody who had cracked wise to him, finally coming back up the aisle and saying, "Okay, who's got number one?"

Nobody answered. Several people in the back of the bus giggled.

"I guess some of you people can't read," Artie said. "Don't none of you know what a one looks like? Awright, awright, that's better," he said, as a tall girl flashing many teeth in a thin face raised her hand in the

back of the bus.

"Awright, come right up here," Artie said.

Her large, embarrassed smile made the whole bus gleam with those teeth as she came toward Artie in a bright red Saturday-night dress.

"Awright, honey," Artie said, putting an arm around her but gazing at his passengers to show them he was only fooling. "Now, I think this is very nice, very cozy."

"Oh, yeah?" she said with a Bronx accent, also playing the passengers but not looking at us.

"Why, I could stand here like this all evening with you."

"Oh, yeah?"

"You mean you couldn't?"

She rolled her eyes upward and pulled down the corners of her mouth. "We-e-ll."

She was a lady of few words, so Artie persuaded her to open her envelope and read to us. She made a face at what she saw on the paper.

"My Gawd!"

Everybody moved forward in his seat.

"Oh, I see now — I thought it said something else."

"I'm gonna explain again," Artie said, pointing a big finger at the words. "You're — supposed — tuh — read — what — it — says — dere — on — duh — pa — per."

She read painstakingly: "Hello, all my dear fellow passengers of the Mystery Bus Ride. I suppose you are all wondering where we are going this evening. Well, you will not know that until the eighth envelope is opened. Right now I will tell you my name. My name is . . ." She looked up blankly.

"You got a name?" Artie asked. "You're supposed to tell us your name."

"Oh, yeah?" she said. "Well, here goes —" and she made a football cheerleader's motion, doubling up her fist and thrusting it above her head toward the passengers. "Isabelle Pin-sky."

Applause from the back of the bus. She rolled her eyes upward to acknowledge it. Then she went back to her reading: "Now all of you turn to the seat in back of you and introduce yourselves."

What knocked me out was that everybody did just that — very seriously and with considerable embarrassment, but they did it. The two old aunts in front of me turned around shyly. "My name is Mrs. Brady," said the one who looked maybe five years older than the other. "This is my daughter, Miss Brady." Miss Brady smiled painfully and I told them a name in exchange — Harold Finch

was the best I could make up on the spur of the moment. I repeated this name to the couple behind me — the two I'd seen in the bus station. The girl was so young and embarrassed that she looked at her boyfriend to see if it was all right to answer a strange man. But they finally discovered their names too: Alice Webber and Herbert Hart.

"Now that we all know each other," read Isabelle with a grimace, "I will tell you where we are going first of all. Driver! Take us to the corner of 14th Street and Seventh Avenue and there we will open Envelope Number Two."

Everybody cheered.

We began moving downtown, away from the bright lights, and I saw now the one great difference between the Mystery Bus Ride and almost any other kind of entertainment you could find around Times Square on a drizzly Saturday night. At a movie, a night club, a penny arcade, a hostess dance hall, you could walk out whenever you took a notion. But the bus ride committed you to a group of people almost as irrevocably as an ocean crossing did. Artie managed to get the pert little blonde with the provocative arch to her nose up there beside him to read the message in Envelope Number Two.

She was cute in her black velvet dress — every limb turned with a precision lathe. She was no Isabelle, averting her eyes and gulping, "Oh, yeah?" She looked her audience (which whistled) straight in its many eyes and said:

"Shut up, all of you!"

Coming from that delicious, baby-toothed, red-and-white mouth of hers, this was as unexpected as a pistol shot. And with a chilling matter-of-factness, she ripped open the envelope (while Artie put an arm around her and leered to get a laugh) and began to read very quickly and shrilly: "Well, Mystery Bus Riders, here we are at 14th Street and Seventh Avenue. I guess you want to know where we are going now, don't you? But before we go on, I want each of you to turn to the people in the seat across the aisle and say hello." She looked up. "Just shut up and do it!"

There was less embarrassment now as everybody did it. "Name is Fred Starkey," said her escort in the seat opposite me.

"Shut up!" Blondie ordered the crowd. Everyone obeyed. "Now, Mister Driver, please tell us *your* name."

"Joe Blow!" "Santa Claus!" "Where'd you get those ears, Artie?"

Artie stood nodding his look

of mock disgust slowly up and down. "Awright," he said, "my name is Action Artie, and I'm gonna take some action against somebody pretty soon."

"Mister Driver," piped Blondie, staring at the paper, "take us through the Holland Tunnel and stop on the New Jersey side, where we will open Envelope Number Three."

A couple of guys tried to start a song, but it got nowhere. The one big joke of the evening came up again when the bus left the tunnel, pulled off the Skyway, and stopped. The rain was driving so hard that a puddle had formed on the floor in back, and when Artie slid out of his seat and turned around, a tall boy with hornrimmed glasses belowed in an ankle-high frog voice:

"Hey, Artie, did you do this the last time you were back here?"

Artie, affecting great boredom and disgust, came back through the bus, stopped at the puddle and stood gazing down at it while slowly shaking his head.

"Tck, tck, tck, you kids got no manners," he said (a restrained splash of nervous laughter escaped from his audience). "I thought I told you what to do if you had to do something like this."

This time Artie pulled out a

tiny plastic outhouse. "Notice how it says LADIES," he said to the men. "I'm going to leave this with you in case of emergency," he told Frog Voice's companion, who turned out to be Isabelle Pinsky herself. "I've got one says GENTLEMEN, too, but I don't see any gentlemen here so I'm keeping it for myself. . . . Awright now, who's got the next envelope?"

In an amatory atmosphere, this childish joke was the only one that anyone would permit himself. It was the only joke that a group of young Americans, aged maybe eighteen to thirty-five (with the two old gray-haired girls and myself, the lone and lonesome wolf, thrown in for contrast) could find to ease the tension of their strangeness to one another and still reflect their aims, which were the aims of kids on dates anywhere.

By Stop Number Eight the fraud of the Mystery Bus Ride was pretty well apparent to everybody. Even Artie was quieter, although he did try to brighten things up by having two men read the last set of directions in unison. And now it could be seen that even having "secret directions" at all was a form of dishonesty. Since Stop Number Two outside the Holland Tunnel, we had never ven-

tured from the highway — had turned off onto U.S. 22, passed the great black blinking sweep of the Newark airport, and raced by one little rained-on New Jersey town after another without seeing anything more than a set of headlights waiting at an intersection, a tree tinsel-seed with rain, a dark house in the distance studded with yellow rectangles of light. But when Artie slowed down and eased his Mystery Bus off the highway onto the gravel parking lot in front of a combination hotdog stand and roadhouse called the Midway Inn, I couldn't believe that the fraud would be so brassily complete. This must be some sort of rest stop.

But this was the destination.

ARTIE's cargo, stiff and damp from the long wet ride, unloaded themselves, huddled around Artie until the unloading was complete, then followed him, as docile as sheep, through the door above which a green neon sign announced uncertainly: PALM ROOM. A four-piece dance band, out of tune, was playing inside. Waiters hurried us along to a plot of reserved tables in the far corner of the room, where we arranged ourselves (under the curious stares of the other customers) like a

leper colony that must not mingle with people who had come here of their own free will. I sat at a long table with Blondie and Fred Starkey, Frog Voice and his Isabelle, and Miss and Mrs. Brady. Artie went outside, came back in and looked us over, then went outside again for good. We were on our own.

"This is the biggest swindle since they sold me the Brooklyn Bridge," said Frog Voice.

"Well, at least I didn't think it would just be like *this*," Isabelle Pinsky said. "I thought we'd at least go some place good."

"Did you get in on this the way I did?" I asked. "Just walk by the bus station and see the sign?"

"We saw it in the newspaper," Frog Voice said. "We came all the way in from Sunnyside to go on this thing."

"That's nothing, we come all the way from Jersey," Blondie said. "And then we come right back here — I could have got off and walked home when we passed by Newark. But I thought it was fun when we opened up the envelopes."

Miss and Mrs. Brady looked deeply into each other's eyes when the waiter came for our order — then daringly ordered highballs. Blondie would have just a coke. Her baby-faced es-

cort gazed at her hungrily but she refused to give him so much as a glance. I wandered outside and found Artie and the woman with the bright red hair sitting at the hotdog counter eating hotdogs. I sat down and ordered a hotdog too.

"You on the ride, ain't you?" Artie asked. He was a different Artie now; subdued, no longer the master of ceremonies.

"Yeah."

"How you like it?"

"Don't like it."

The redheaded woman peered past him at me. Her mouth was full of sandwich but she managed to say: "Oh, sometimes they have lots of fun. Sometimes there are groups of girls and everything. This is just a bad night." She gave Artie a possessive look. "Why, Artie and I met on the bus ride. Didn't we, Artie?"

"That's right," Artie said. "Lot of people meet on the bus ride."

"And you go along on the ride every Saturday night?" I asked her.

"Oh, I enjoy taking the ride," she said. "I always go."

I wandered around the grounds, then went back to the table. They all had new drinks, but they were sitting there glumly — the music seemed as

sapped of vitality as the bus company's idea of a mysterious destination. Everyone was acutely conscious of his hands.

Artie came in at last and rescued us from ourselves. We filed out in good order after him, loaded back into the bus — each person taking his old seat. The bus coughed, then whined forward. A bleak fog of silence hugged us as we started back.

Hugged us until, out of the gloom of the highway ahead, a wild scene came running toward us, and then we were passing it. Like some giant bug thrown over onto its back, a sedan lay beside the road, its wheels no longer spinning. A police car and two other cars had stopped and in the glare of their headlights we saw the three bodies, humiliatingly thrown in ragdoll positions along the highway — two girls and a man, their blood crawling away from them in widening blots.

The scene was behind us and running away. We raced toward Manhattan as something like a sigh ran through the bus and cut our boredom and disappointment away from us.

"I guess maybe they wanted to wander into the unknown too," Frog Voice said suddenly.

He expected a laugh, but nobody made a sound.

The Voice of Margaret Truman

A Critique

BY DOKTOR PUTZI SZCZERBOWSKI, LL., D.M.

(Note: On the fourth morning after Margaret Truman's now famous recital in Constitution Hall, an intense, bespectacled, white-haired, little man with a beard rushed into THE MERCURY's offices. He looked a little like Einstein, a little like Toscanini, but with the beard. It developed that he was none other than Doktor Putzi Szczerbowski, the great Polish music critic, who only recently arrived in New York. The Doktor was in the highest dudgeon. He kept shouting "pigs, louts, goatberds" in several languages; then he exhausted his octolingual vocabulary on words like Communists, deviationists, Reactionaries, and Imperialist dogs. At last we understood that, with all these words, he was referring to the Washington music critics. He requested — demanded is a more accurate word — that we publish his critique so that the American people may have the truth.)

WHEN I go to Constitution Hall in Washington — with my friend Professor Lothar Einesgeben of your State Department — I do not go for music. We go for politics. Our impulsions are socio-political; we go to observe Clement Attlee and Harry S. Truman and the American bureaucrats; we are ready to think politics and close our music ears while some milk-

maid tortures the compositions of the masters.

While the dowagers waddle to their seats, the Professor and I are observing Attlee, and the Professor has just made an obscene remark about Bevin and his attitude on the Polish question when — ah — the artist appears. We halt our words — and feel the first *soups*on of surprise tingle our spines. Miss Truman is no milkmaid! Such carriage! Such presence! Such — how do you call it? — such *selbstbejahung*!

The Professor whispered to me and our thoughts were identical: we had not seen such presence since that night in 1922 when the immortal Gertrude Schummél floated onto the stage of the Musikvereinsaal in Vienna.

She breathed — and her breathing technique is *magnifique*! The Professor clutched my knee and whispered: "Like Pia Tassinari!" But to this I murmured: "Non, non — it is Jenny Lind at her greatest!"

She stroked the first note, and the Professor gasped: "What a *cantilena*! A marvelous *cantilena*!" The note, born in perfection, seemed to float out into the great hall, and I perceived it in clarity. I have not heard such a note since a night in Brussels, at the *Monnai*, when the immortal Gabriella Gatti formed the second C above F in Schubert's "*Nachtrigall*."

From that moment the Professor and I sat mute, in worship, for we knew that we were sharing an experience which comes to few musicians: we were witnessing the birth of one of the immortal artists of the ages!

First, she sang songs of your own American, Francis Hopkinson. Under the spell of her interpretation I could see not only the *weltschmerz* and the *weltanschauung* of this grieving world, I could also see all that America means: the ponderous buffaloes roaming the plains of Pennsylvania; the sighing Douglas fir trees of North Dakota; the bosomy Mississippi with black men yearning to be free; and the noble red men dropping their heads in sorrow from a mountain top in Texas as they gaze back at their lost empire.

The Professor and I, we are frozen in enchantment as the

artist moves to the German songs of Robert Schumann. With "Der Nussbaum" I can hear the *waldweben* of Wagner caressing my ear; and when she honored us with the beautiful "Die Forelle" I am lost in memories of Victoria de Los Angeles and Maria Caniglia.

At the intermission the Professor and I awakened partially from our rapturous dream. "What *gefühlstiefe*!" he said. "What *musikalische frasierung*!" And our rapture was disturbed by only one observation: the posturing critics — none of them could appreciate the art.

"Swine! Pearls before swine!" the Professor and I muttered.

In her concluding songs, agonizingly rapturous, she proved master of all the great skills: perfect employment of the diaphragm; amazing ability with the staccato and the trill; friendship with the vibrato and the obbligato; flexibility; humor; uniform roundness of tones. She is the most inspired and talented singer of our time; her voice flatters even Chopin.

Margaret Truman is now America's greatest asset — greater than Niagara Falls. But she belongs not only to America; she belongs to the world, to the ages!

Dr. Szczerbowski will report on other cultural events in America in future issues of this magazine.

Fingle Bears Like Very Soft Things

A STORY



BY TERENCE O'BRIEN

THE MAN EDGED along the fence in the park and waited near the top gate, watching the little girl in the red sun-suit. He had been watching her all morning.

When the child had almost completed her circuit of the pond, she suddenly stopped, lifted the stick clear above her head and threw it into the water.

She flicked her fallen shoulder-strap into position once more, then turned from the pool and started off toward the bottom gate.

The moment she moved, so did the man. He padded along the grass beside the fence, traveling at more than double her speed, and when he was nearly a hundred yards ahead, he swerved in to intercept her path. He stopped at a seat and glanced quickly about the park — except for a keeper working on the flower beds beyond the children's pool, he and the child were alone. He dropped to his knees and grasped the front leg of the seat with both hands. As the child drew near, his grip tightened; he seemed to be trying to twist the metal.

She halted in the middle of the path. After a moment she stepped closer, crouching down to examine the leg of the seat.

The man seemed unaware of her presence. He gave one final twist to the seat leg and suddenly relaxed on his heels.

"That'll do," he said.

He went to the other end of the seat, completely ignoring the child. Once more he knelt down and clenched the metal leg; his knuckles blanched as he applied the pressure.

The child followed him; she peered at his hands, then at his set face. "What are you doing,

Mister?" she asked.

The man gave no indication that he had heard the question. As he increased his grip on the leg, the sinews in his wrist heightened to bas-relief and sweat mushroomed on his forehead.

She said, "Does it hurt you?"

At that moment the man grunted harshly, then, having got the child's attention, immediately released the compression of his breath and sank back, his hands falling to his sides. He wiped his brow and pulled himself slowly into the seat.

The child, still squatting on the ground, tilted her head to look up at him. "Does it hurt?" she asked.

He answered shortly, "S'all right now." His head was drooped on his chest and his eyes were closed, but he was breathing more easily now.

The child inspected the leg of the seat; she dabbed at it tentatively and then, apparently reassured, began to graze the smooth surface with her tiny fingers.

The man squinted at her delicate bare shoulders, but averted his eyes quickly when she raised her head.

"Was it broken?" she asked.

He eased back in his seat — leaning well away from the

child — and smiled at her. He seemed very pleased that his fooling with the seat had been so effective in getting the child there near him. "No, it was twisted; but I've fixed it now. Fingle Bears come around at night time and twist them, and I've got to straighten them out. They're my Fingle Bears, you see. I've got them at home."

"What are Fingle Bears?"

She had risen to her feet and was standing close in front of him now.

"They're a kind of little bear — a little brown furry bear. They're the loveliest little things you can imagine. You've never seen one, have you?"

"No."

"They're very hard to see. Only one little girl has ever seen one. I've got two of them at my little cottage right now."

"How big are they? As big as this?" She stretched her arms to their full length.

"Oh no! They're only tiny little things. Look! I'll show you." He reached forward, clasped her smooth little wrists, and brought them within a few inches of each other. "Just like that. You ought to see them. They're a lovely brown furry color, and they're all soft and warm to cuddle. You'd love them." He was still holding her wrists, his fingers caressing the

smooth skin.

She drew her arms free. "I saw a lion at the zoo. And a monkey drinking out of a cup."

"Everyone has seen lions and monkeys drinking out of cups. The zoo's never been able to catch a Fingle Bear, though; I'm the only person in the whole world who's ever caught one. One of the ones I have at the little cottage is a baby Fingle Bear. He's lovely. All soft and cuddly and everything! He's only this big." He held out his own hands cupped together, and the child regarded them closely.

"Does he cry?"

"Only when no one comes to see him; that always makes him cry. He wants someone to come and see him now — to talk to him and pick him up and cuddle him. He's very sad today."

"What does he eat?"

"Only very very soft things — things like sponge cake, and jelly. But most of all he loves ripe bananas. He loves someone to hold them out to him while he eats them. I've got some to give him today, but he won't take them from me; he's — ah — he's angry with me. I wish I could get someone to hold a banana for him."

"What is he angry for? Because you ate his banana?"

"No. He's angry because I promised him I'd get someone

else to hand him the banana for breakfast this morning. But I couldn't; my little girl is away at Granny's and I couldn't find anyone else. Both the Fingle Bears were very sad — the little baby one, most. You see, I broke my promise. I wish I could find someone to help me."

"What's her name?"

"Her name? Oh, my little girl! It's Mary. And the baby Fingle Bear cries when she's not there to feed him — or some other little girl."

"How old is she?"

"She's four. If only —"

"I'm five and a half — nearly."

"Are you now! But you've never seen a Fingle Bear."

"No. What do they hurt the seats for?"

"Because they're so sad that no one hands them their bananas and plays with them. They like a little girl to feed them, someone like Mary. Of course, if I could get someone older than Mary — wouldn't it be wonderful for them! The baby Fingle Bear would be so happy."

THE KEEPER who had been pottering about the flower beds was now approaching the children's pool, and the man was watching him carefully.

"The Fingle Bears get sick if they're kept waiting for their

bananas," he went on. "I'm frightened the little baby Fingle Bear might die, even." He rose to his feet; the keeper was walking along the edge of the water.

The child turned. The keeper had continued around the pond and was now strolling away from them, along the path that led over the hill. She reverted to the man, studied his face for a moment and then said, "What are you frightened of him for?"

The question snatched his attention. He said hurriedly, "I'm not frightened — it's just that I thought he might come and tell me to untwist some more legs. I'm very tired." He slumped down in the seat again. "I wish I could find someone to come and feed the Fingle Bears and play with them — especially the little baby Fingle Bear."

"Does he bite?"

"No. He loves to be fed. Mary isn't afraid of him at all, and she's only four."

"I'm not afraid either." She kicked at the loose gravel on the path.

He leaned forward, his head resting on his knees. "Yes, you are. You're afraid of a little baby Fingle Bear. Yes, you are."

"I'm not. I'm —" she stopped suddenly as she looked up at his eyes, only a few inches from her face.

He turned sharply, then slowly

raised his head. Finally, he spoke in soft soliloquy, "What will I do with the chocolates and the ice cream, I wonder?"

The child made no reply.

He nodded to her. "Yes. You see, Mary asked me to give them to the little girl who fed the bananas to the Fingle Bears. She said, 'You must give them to her, Daddy.' Just before she went away, she said that to me."

"Is it a white box, and a red ribbon with a bow on the top?"

"Yes, those are the ones. And it's strawberry ice cream — with real strawberries in it, too."

"Where is it?"

"Just near the little box where the Fingle Bears sleep. Just waiting for someone. I suppose I'll have to throw it away — and the chocolates, too — if no one'll feed the poor little Fingle Bear."

"Do you live there?" She pointed over his shoulder to the block of flats on the far side of the road.

"No," he said, without turning his head, "but it's only a little bit farther away. I go in the car. You know, Mary always sits in the front with me when I drive; she's not a bit frightened."

"I'm not frightened. I always sit in the front of Uncle Peter's

car. And I steered, too."

"You did! That was clever. Oh well!" He rested on the arm of the seat and eased himself to his feet. "I can't get anyone to feed the little furry Fingle Bear. He'll be so sad there's no one to give him the bananas, and cuddle him. I hope he doesn't die before Mary comes back — he's such a lovely little baby bear."

"Can I feed him?"

"You? Well, I suppose you could." He answered slowly, as if he were considering this suggestion. He suddenly clapped his hands, and said excitedly, "Yes! Why not? It's a wonderful idea! But could you do it? We won't take long — just run out and feed the bananas and eat the ice cream and chocolates and then come back in plenty of time for your dinner."

"Can I hold him for a little while?"

"Oh yes! Baby Fingle Bear will love it. He might even want to come back home with you. We'll see. We'll see — I say, would you like to play the game I play with Mary?"

"What game?"

"Well, I go over to the car — it's that blue one over there." He indicated the sedan that was parked across the road. "Then I open the back door and wave to you, and you run over and get in and hide on the floor. Then

no one can see you and tell the Fingle Bears you're coming. They get a surprise that way. Will we do that?"

She nodded.

"And you promise not to say a word to anyone? Especially policemen, because they always tell. That would spoil everything. Promise?"

"I promise. Cross my heart and hope to die a billion, billion times."

"All right. Now, I'll go first, and you wait until I wave to you, eh?" He began to step back from her, and as he moved he said, "Not a word to anyone, now. Remember — you promised. And when I wave, you run over. Watch me, now." He turned then, and hurried down the path; twice he stopped to look back at the child, each time raising a finger to his lips. Two women, one of them leading a dachshund, entered the park together as he neared the gate; he pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and ruffled it loosely about his nose as he walked past them. When he arrived at the car, he opened the near-side door, looked briefly at the two women — they had turned to the right — and then waved to the child in the park.

She began to run down the path to the gate.

He climbed into the front seat

and started the engine. He dried his moist palms on the lapels of his coat, and while the child was crossing the road and running up towards him, he kept glancing into the rear-vision mirror, swaying his head as if to increase the sweep of his view. He took two chocolate bars from the glove-box and dropped them on the floor behind him.

The child tiptoed past him, stepped into the car, and closed the door so that it only clicked on the first catch.

He reached back and slammed the door fully, then spoke to her in an intimate, low voice, "Ssh! Lie down on the floor for a little while until I tell you to get up. The Fingle Bears have left two chocolate bars there for you. Stay on the floor while you eat them; we don't want anyone to see us now, do we?"

"No." She was already sitting on the floor of the car; now she unwrapped one of the chocolates.

HE DROVE off northward. The child was silent for nearly ten minutes, during which time she finished eating the first bar of chocolate, then she knelt on the floor and held to the top of the front seat. "Can I come up now?" she asked.

"Better not, just yet. They

might see you. Have you eaten all the chocolate?" Whilst he was talking he leaned over and grabbed in the glove-box, but he withdrew his hand empty when she spoke again.

"There's this one." She held it high above the level of the seat.

He was looking into the mirror. "Lie down quietly and eat it. The little Fingle Bear gave them as a present and he'll be very sad if you don't like them. And we don't want anyone to tell on us yet, do we? And spoil our surprise?"

"No." She sat down again and removed the wrapper from the chocolate. She ate more slowly this time.

At the next crossroads they were stopped by the lights. On the corner of the road, within five yards of the car, a policeman was standing. He seemed to be staring straight at the man in the driving seat.

The man stroked his right cheek, the action covering a whispered warning. "Ssh! A policeman!"

The child was suddenly stilled.

A young woman spoke to the policeman; as he answered her, he pointed up the road in the direction the car was facing.

The lights changed at that moment and the man drove on; he was sitting tensely erect and

he kept glancing into the mirror, but when they reached the next bend he relaxed once more.

A few minutes later, just after they had taken a right-hand fork, the child's head appeared above the seat. "Can I come up now? I finished it all."

He called over his shoulder, "All right. But you'll be careful, won't you — we don't want to spoil everything. Give me your hand." He groped back and found her hand, felt along to the warm armpit, then dragged her over the top of the seat.

She sat down beside him at first, but her head was below the level of the window ledge, and soon afterwards she scrambled to her knees and was able to look out at the roadside. She held out her left hand, flattened to the slipstream of the car, then began moving it forwards against the wind pressure and allowing it to be blown back again. The strap of her sun-suit gradually slipped down her arm.

The man reached out slowly towards her naked shoulder but he suddenly snatched his hand back to the wheel.

The child had ducked below the window; a car was approaching them from the front. She remained crouching close to the seat until the car was long past them, then she looked up at the man. "He didn't see me,

did he?"

He smiled down at her. "No, that's right. We mustn't let anyone see you yet, must we?"

"No, not yet." She slid the strap onto her right shoulder and leaned out of the window once more.

They traveled three miles without meeting any further traffic, then the man slowed down and turned through an open gateway.

At length the child withdrew from the window. "Is it very far away?" she whispered.

"No, we're nearly there now." He took his hands, one at a time, from the wheel and wiped them dry on his coat again.

"Will the little Fingle Bear see us coming?"

"No. Keep quiet, though."

She said, "Will —" but left the question unfinished. She twisted in the seat and gripped the window ledge again.

They were now approaching a small whitewashed cottage at the end of the road.

The child suddenly noticed the cottage; she held on to the back of the seat and looked out through the windscreen. "It's all clean," she said. "Where is the little Fingle Bear?"

"You'll see him in a minute." The track led around to a garage in the rear, but he stopped the car beside the cor-

ner of the cottage. When he had switched off the engine, he said to her, "I better make certain there's no policeman here, hadn't I? You wait a minute, eh?"

"Yes," she whispered.

On the short walk to the cottage his footsteps fumbled uncertainly about the grass, for he kept twitching his head from side to side as if to ensure he was not surprised. He selected a heavy key from the key ring and opened the front door.

Once inside, he hurried through the room, along a short passage, and straight to the kitchen door; he snapped back the bolt and stepped into the sunlight. For a moment he checked himself, looking hastily about the deserted yard, then he ran across to the garage, peered around the far corner of the building and immediately turned for the house again. He slammed the kitchen door, shot the bolt home, then darted through the cottage and out to the child.

She was peeping over the window ledge, but as he stumbled towards the car she suddenly cowered back in the seat.

He opened the door. He was breathing rapidly through the mouth now, and he said shortly, "Come on."

"I don't want to. I want to go home. I want to go home." Her hands wavered towards the driving wheel.

He lunged forward, clutched her forearm, and pulled her from the car. Without altering his grip, he hurried her across the grass to the cottage.

She whimpered, "I want to go home, I want to go home, I want to go home." As she spoke for the last time she tried to cling to the doorway, but he jerked her clear and spun her into the room.

He turned, and for a moment he stood alone on the threshold, his pale blue eyes glancing about the quiet countryside. Then he stepped back into the shadow, and the door was closed.

Terence O'Brien is an Australian. This is the first story of his to be published in America. He was a bomber pilot with the R.A.F. in the last war. For a long while he wrote principally for his own delight, not caring very much about publishing anything.



In the Mercury's Opinion —

Brains Can Win For America

WHAT THIS COUNTRY needs now is for its people to sit down for an hour, light their pipes, scratch their heads, and remind themselves that while one man may be as *good* as another, one man is seldom as *smart* as another. And in this wicked world only brains — the best brains — can safeguard a great, rich, and powerful nation.

Rome did a fair job of protecting herself and managing her world for four hundred years because, in times of crisis, there usually was at least one crafty old Roman who could outwit the rascals. He understood the nature of rascals: he knew that, with rascals, you either buy them, or assassinate them, or play one rascal against another. You never allow all the rascals to gang up on you; and if you must fight a rascal, you fight

him in your way, not in his.

Similarly with Britain. For three hundred years a tough-minded, selfish, resourceful, and, withal, great people, living on an island the size of Alabama, managed the world because they had leaders with brains. They had smart men like Disraeli — cool-headed, horse-trading, objective characters who knew how to cold-deck a rascal in a deal, how to organize coalitions against any rascal who kicked over the traces.

Then the United States of America came to world power — the richest and most powerful nation of them all — a nation which either had to manage its world or it would be quickly sacked by the rascals. But where, since we came to world power in 1919, have been our cool-headed and crafty leaders? And particularly since 1945, when our nation became the responsible cus-

todian of the Western ideal, where have been our Disraelis, our cunning statesmen who know how to protect a free and wealthy people from vandals?

Since 1945 the leadership of this nation has been in the hands, principally, of three men: Truman, Marshall, and Acheson. They form a triumvirate of mutual admiration. Truman calls Marshall "the greatest living American." Marshall modestly argues that Truman is the "greatest living American"; and they both concede that Acheson is the third greatest living American. Their admiration for one another is a measure of the quality of their judgment.

In Truman's case, well, not even his mother ever claimed he was smart. She said he was a good boy; she didn't say he was smart. And the late Charlie Ross, the President's boyhood friend and press secretary, said: "He lacks the capacity to be a great President, but I think he may make a good one." When Truman was elected road commissioner, his cronies agreed that he had exceeded both his aspirations and his capacities; and Bernard Baruch, who has a reputation for wisdom, called Truman "a rude, uncouth, and ignorant man."

So in our process of attaining unity and getting our feet on

the ground, we Americans have needed, first, to do what we have done: just admitted that poor Truman was a mistake. At a time when we needed greatness and brilliance, we chose one of the least among us. The Presidency of the United States is for a shrewd, intelligent man; not for a boob or a yahoo or a Common Man.

General Marshall is a good man and a patriot against whom nothing can be said except this: he is usually wrong. He can't remember where he was the night before Pearl Harbor; he sat at Roosevelt's side at Teheran when Stalin swiped half of Europe; he insisted on giving Russia control of Manchuria in order to "induce" Russia to fight Japan; he ordered Chiang Kai-shek to coalesce with the Chinese Communists; he advised Truman to send ground troops into Korea; and he now wants to send American ground divisions to Europe. In the next issue THE MERCURY will attempt to estimate how much Marshall's lack of judgment has cost this country in blood and dollars.

Mr. Acheson may also be a good man and a patriot. His mustache is neatly clipped; his tailoring is flawless — Truman is reported to admire it. Nothing need be said against Acheson ex-

cept that 90 per cent of all Americans hold him in contempt: he fronted for all the knaves-and-fools in the State Department, and he has been wrong almost as many times as Marshall.

Here's how this triumvirate works. When there was Communist aggression in Korea last June, Truman was handed an intelligent plan by which we could punish the aggressors. It was a smart plan, prepared in our War College by cool heads and sharp brains. Under this plan we would *not* send ground troops into South Korea. Instead, we would blockade Korea and begin systematic destruction of the industry and transport of North Korea. True, the Communists could push into South Korea, but then what would be their situation? An enemy which they could not reach would be standing off in safety pounding them to death. The United States would be in the *smart* position of being able to punish without being made to suffer; the Communists would be in the stupid position of having to take punishment from a foe which they could not reach.

This plan was urged upon Truman by brilliant men, but he insisted on taking counsel with his first and third "greatest living Americans." Marshall advised him to send in the ground

troops; and thus Truman and Marshall committed this nation to the stupid position and left the smart position to the Moscow strategists.

All the Americans who have lost their lives and limbs in the Korean ground fighting are sacrifices to the stupidity of Truman and Marshall and Acheson.

Therefore, before there can be national unity and national confidence, the American people must find some protection against Truman and Marshall and Acheson; and the only protective agency is the Congress. Through its powers of the purse and review, Congress must assume a new measure of responsibility. The Senate, particularly, must try to restrain the President, try to persuade General Marshall to return to his farm, try to encourage Mr. Acheson to resume his law practice, and try to serve as custodians of the nation until the people can have a new chance to find intelligent leadership.

How Brains Can Win In Europe

With such failures in leadership it is hardly surprising that a neo-isolationism, born of despondency, is spreading among the American people. The voices of Joseph P. Kennedy and Herbert Hoover, crying retreat, are

falling on receptive ears. But both Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Hoover are wrong: the world is not yet lost; there is still time to save Western Europe and perhaps Asia, if only our men-of-vision can be brought to power in Washington.

On one point Truman and Acheson are correct: the aim of American policy should be to prevent Russian occupation of Western Europe so as to prevent further consolidation of strength against America. But, just as in Korea, Truman, Marshall and Acheson are wrong when they propose to safeguard Western Europe with American ground divisions.

Western Europe is only an enlarged Korea. It, too, is a peninsula of the Asiatic heartland. And now that 1) Russia has cut Europe in half, and 2) that there has been a Russo-Chinese consolidation, no intelligent military man believes that an invasion of Western Europe can be prevented by ground armies.

How then do we prevent an invasion of Europe and a consolidation of all Eurasia against us?

Here is the *smart* plan for America and for the West, the plan devised by crafty, clever, cool-headed men:

1. We select those bases which we believe we can hold, and there we erect our power. We don't erect power on any base which can be readily assailed by the Asiatic hordes.

2. We cover with a Monroe Doctrine all territory which we cannot hold but which we wish to deny to the enemy. Western Europe is already so covered: we are committed to go to war if Western Europe is invaded.

3. We then *concentrate* American resources and ingenuity on the creation of unchallengeable air-atomic power erected on unassailable bases. If we maintain this position, what sane Russian will want to risk war with us?

If, after we implement this plan, Russia marches across Western Europe, we will have Russia at the same disadvantage that we would have had the Communists in Korea if we had not sent in our ground troops. We will be able to assault all the sources of Russian power, yet Russia will lack the means to retaliate in kind or degree. *We will have forced Russia into an air-atomic war where we hold the advantages, instead of allowing Russia to force us into a ground war where she holds the advantages.*

With such a plan, free men in both America and Western Europe can again take hope.

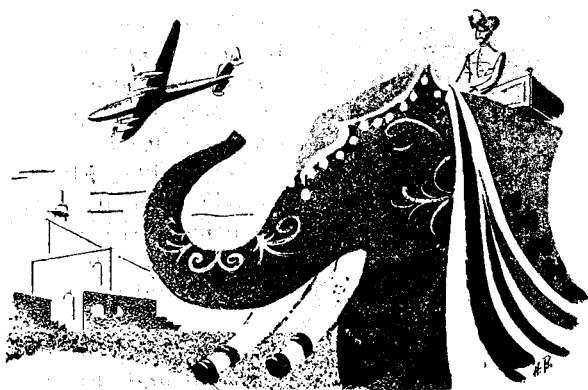
An Indian Examines Nehru

BY DR. TARAKNATH DAS

NO ONE WHO has followed the conduct of India in the Korean crisis, and in relation to communist China generally, can doubt that the personality and political nature of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, its Prime Minister, are of direct significance for America. Aside from India's specific weight in the Asian equation, there is the fact that so many influential American liberals have adopted Nehru as their own, and endowed him with the colors of their own

ardent and extravagant hopes.

Perhaps it was to be expected that certain liberals, yearning for a messiah to redeem a brutally illiberal world — preferably a messiah in some distant land, removed from too much probing — should have picked on the Indian leader. Like Nehru himself, they crave to escape unpleasant realities. They have need for an idyllic middle ground between the capitalist democracy they have rejected and the communist monstrosity that has,



in effect, rejected them. The Pandit Nehru, wearing Gandhi's mantle of spirituality, seems to fill the bill. Here, they proclaim eagerly, is an Eastern prophet with a Western mind, non-communist without being anti-communist; in short, a leader to mediate between the contending worlds.

It is well that Americans should examine the Prime Minister, not in sentimental ecstasy but quite calmly. No less than Nehru's countrymen, they must try to ascertain whether the man, for all his humanism and mental attainments, is really the chosen of destiny to lead Asia and through Asia the world; whether an Indian government in his image can serve as stabilizer and conciliator in this period of grim totalitarian threats.

Clearly, Pandit Nehru is a man of exceptional intellect and literary gifts, a cultured gentleman with a winning personality. He has assimilated the best in both India's culture and that of the west. He is a cosmopolitan idealist, often dreaming of beauty in nature and sublimity in man. He has made sacrifices for human freedom, suffering long confinements in Indian prisons. He is a staunch supporter of human rights, the principles of which are elaborately set forth in the Constitution of

the Indian Republic. There is greatness in the man that has brought him the adoration of the Indian masses and respect in the outside world.

In sum, it is impossible to question Nehru's idealism and sincerity. What can and should be questioned, precisely because his views and behavior are so critical in the scales of events, is the effectiveness of Nehru's actions. In appraising him as a statesman, one is reminded of the celebrated dictum of Hegel: "To be good is not enough; one must be effectively good." Has Nehru's goodness been effective? Before attempting an answer, let us look at his background.

The original home of his ancestors was in beautiful Kashmir, and they were Brahmins. About 1716, one of Nehru's forebears moved to Delhi, and after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the family moved to Allahabad. It was there that Jawaharlal Nehru was born on November 11, 1889, in a rich, westernized lawyer's home.

His father, the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, until the early twenties of this century, according to his son, "admired the English and their ways" and in politics was a "moderate nationalist." Jawaharlal, raised and tutored in an anglicized home, did not attend Indian

schools and had a "lonely childhood." At sixteen, he was sent to Harrow in England. Two years later he entered Cambridge and specialized in science; but later he became a barrister. On returning home in 1912, he followed his father's profession at Allahabad for a time.

British persecution of Indian nationalists and their sympathizers during the First World War brought about a change in the elder Nehru, "who was drifting away from the orthodox moderate position in politics." It pushed the son even further in the direction of passionate nationalism. At one time Nehru was inclined to join the extreme left-wing of the movement — the underground revolutionists — but instead he came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, who was then preaching non-violent non-cooperation as the means for Indian freedom. In 1916 Nehru was married and spent some months in Kashmir, his ancestral home, for which he has a great and romantic attachment. From then until Gandhi's assassination in 1948, Nehru's political life was deeply

affected by his master and guide. The rest is current history.

SPEAKING before the Congress of the United States on October 13, 1949, Nehru defined the goal of his country's foreign policy: "Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened, or where aggression takes place, we cannot and we shall not be neutral. . . ."

Without for a moment doubting that he meant this, one can doubt that his guidance of Indian policy in the Korean crisis has been consistent with this principle. Freedom and justice were not merely threatened but cynically violated; aggression has been open and massive. But India, in substance if not in form, has been neutral. She joined the majority in the first United Nations denunciation of the North Korean assault. But almost immediately Nehru struck out on a policy of his own, seeking to act as mediator. In effect he pleaded that the Kremlin be paid off with a security council seat for Soviet China for calling off its military banditry in Korea.

Naturally, he was applauded by Stalin and the Communist world. As always in these years, the illusion of a mediating force operated to the advantage of the men without illusions in Mos-

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cow. But the United States firmly rejected the plan, and Nehru's hope of acting as a "third force" failed. His subsequent conduct was marked by similar inconsistency.

To understand Nehru's strange role in the Korean affair, one must know the strength of his conviction that India is destined to serve as a balance-wheel in world politics. One must realize also his profound belief that co-operation between India and China — even a puppet China manipulated for larger Communist purposes — is essential to the future of his continent. Nehru visualizes India as the leader of an Asiatic bloc aligned with neither the pro- nor anti-Soviet forces.

That vision rests on the same kind of refusal to acknowledge the true character of imperialist Communism that is endemic in "liberal" circles the world over, and is at bottom a species of wishful thinking. The core of the fallacy, of course, is in its assumption that the choice is between two blocs with equal moral claims on the allegiance of mankind. Despite verbal finessing, it takes a stance of substantial impartiality as between freedom and slavery, between democracy and its opposite. The very premise of a third force is that the other two are equally

"right," or perhaps equally wrong, and that the desirable condition is somewhere midway between them. No matter how it may be rationalized, it is a position that accepts totalitarian horror as valid and aims to give it permanence.

Nehru and those for whom he speaks in all countries, the United States included, fail to recognize that while the Soviet bloc is under iron discipline, the so-called American bloc is a voluntary alliance of the loosest sort. With respect to China, they are obliged to convince themselves, in defiance of the evidence and common sense, that Mao Tse-tung's regime is a free agent rather than an extension of Stalinist power. To maintain their equivocal position they must close their ears and minds to explicit statements on the issue by leaders of the Soviet bloc. Said Mao Tse-tung on July 1, 1949:

"To sit on the fence is impossible; a third road does not exist. . . . Not only in China, but also in the world, without exception, one either leans to the side of imperialism" — Communist slang for democracy — "or to the side of socialism. Neutrality is a mere camouflage and a third road does not exist."

But the self-hypnosis of a Nehru would seem to be proof

against such candor. Even while he was toiling to obtain worldwide recognition for Mao's regime, the New China News Agency, speaking for Communist China, rewarded him with juicy insults: "British and American imperialism and their running dog, Pandit Nehru. . . ."

A certain measure of sympathy for Soviet Russia will be found among the leaders of nearly all Asiatic movements to end colonialism. During the first decade of its power, Soviet Russia energetically fomented revolutions in Asia, to enhance its own influence on that continent and to harass the great colonial nations which opposed the Bolshevik regime. To the young Nehru, Moscow's propaganda of freedom for "oppressed colonial peoples" spelled hope; Moscow seemed to him a genuine friend. Thirty years later, and in stubborn disregard of Soviet conduct in both Europe and Asia, he has not wholly freed himself of these youthful impressions.

Going abroad for the first time after the completion of his British education, Nehru came to Geneva in 1926. He observed the forces in and outside the League of Nations which might help the cause of Indian independence. Soviet Russia seemed the chief of these, closely seconded by Germany. The two

countries were collaborating against the Allied Powers at this time; support of revolutionary trends in India and other Asiatic colonies fitted well into their self-interests.

It was in Berlin, with the support of Moscow, that the idea of a Congress of Oppressed Nationalities originated. It took place in Brussels early in February, 1927. Nehru played a prominent part in it, and it was to play a prominent part in his life. For it molded his future views and political relationships, some of which hardened to the point of dogma and obsession. It is not too much to say that India's ambivalent attitudes in the U. N. in 1950-51 stemmed directly from Jawaharlal Nehru's first experience in international politics in Belgium a quarter of a century earlier.

The Soviets pulled the leading strings in that Brussels congress. That Nehru was aware of this, and complacent about it, is explicit in his writings. That he did not fully grasp or rightly appraise the significance of the Soviet role is all too clear. In his *Autobiography*, in 1936, he wrote:

"There were many labor organizations represented and several well-known men who had played a leading part in European labor struggles for a generation, and they took an impor-

tant part in the proceedings.”

Then Nehru added: “They came not as Communists but as representatives of trade union or similar organizations.” Communists, in other words, in trade union and other non-Communist disguises.

The techniques of Communist infiltration had been perfected by 1926. The League Against Imperialism that grew out of the Brussels gathering was one of the earliest “front” organizations devised by the Communist International to befuddle world opinion and exploit decent liberal instincts. It was the lineal forerunner of the whole array of camouflaged Muscovite organizations which have promoted the Kremlin’s program.

Nehru himself notes how important a part in organizing the Congress was taken by “the Chinese belonging to the left wing of the Kuomintang, cooperating with Communists and near-Communists.” With the frankness of a clean conscience he tells how the Brussels meeting and subsequent committee meetings of the League helped him understand the inner conflicts of labor in the West: a circumlocution for the Moscow drive to capture organized labor. And his allegiance was substantially on Moscow’s side: “As between the labor worlds

of the Second International and the Third International, my sympathies were for the latter. . . . *I turned inevitably with good will towards Communism, for, whatever its faults, it was at least not imperialistic.*”

Three decades ago many people, the writer included, honestly hoped that the collapse of Tsardom was a great step towards a more democratic era. But how, in the light of the history of the last five years, can anyone continue to be blind to the brashly imperialist character of Soviet Russia? Yet Nehru, to judge by his actions — like so many American liberals — still clings to the early illusions.

As a natural sequel to his involvement in the “front” League, and possibly to bring revolutionary India and the Soviets closer together, Nehru, his wife, father and sister visited Moscow in November, 1927, during the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Soviet regime. In summing up his impressions, he admitted his dislike of Soviet violence, regimentation and suppression of freedom of thought. But in the classic style of the confused fellow-traveler he explained that, after all, the violence was in the interests of a new and better future: “In the balance, there-

fore, I was all in favor of Russia and the presence and example of the Soviets was a bright and heartening phenomenon in a dark and dismal world."

The anti-American bias that so often obtrudes in Nehru's thinking is, in a sense, the obverse of his pro-Soviet fixations. The picture of America that emerged from his associations with Kremlin propagandists was naturally distorted. To this day he seems far more fearful of American capitalism than he is of the rampant Red imperialism right on his frontiers.

Oddly enough, Nehru's distrust of the United States has a dual origin. It derives in part also from the early British influence. During the seven formative years of his sojourn at Harrow and Cambridge he came into close contact with the then fashionable derogation of America. That youthful prejudice might have been dissipated, but the Soviet influence came along to fix it in his psychology.

The fact remains that Nehru and other Asian leaders never seemed to suspect that the primary objective of Soviet policy was to create a Communist force to be used in spreading Soviet imperialism at any cost. This tendency to evade the harsh facts of *real-politik* is at the root, too, of Nehru's concept of India

as a third force. He does not distinguish sharply enough between the inherent differences, in moral terms and in terms of political freedoms, between the other two forces. Nor does he seem to realize that a hungry India, an India which produces less than two million tons of steel annually, and which has many and vast internal problems to solve, cannot become the mediating force in a world where political influence is measured by physical power.

In line with his ideal of Asian solidarity, his government preceded even Britain in recognizing Communist China. He was eager to demonstrate that, despite India's opposition to Communism at home, it could maintain friendly relations with it abroad. He must naturally have expected, by way of a *quid pro quo*, that Red China and Soviet Russia would cease to aid and encourage Indian Communists in their subversive activities; that Tibet would not be molested; that outstanding Chinese-Tibetan questions would be answered by peaceful negotiation.

The disillusionment he has been forced to suffer is a prime example of historic irony. Comrade Mao's invasion of Tibet came to Nehru as a violent shock. Soviet China made a

mockery of its solemn promises on this score. When Nehru's ambassador in Peiping protested, he was advised, in effect, to mind his own business and not interfere with what Communist China regards as its private sphere. The comforting idea, based on wishful thinking, that Mao was independent of Stalin and that Chinese purposes took precedence over Communist world strategy was exploded.

Pandit Nehru, it should be understood in America, had fallen into the tragic error so industriously promoted here by Owen Lattimore, Edgar Snow, Frederick Vanderbilt Field and their confreres. He considered Mao basically a Chinese nationalist pursuing agrarian reforms in China, who had come to power through popular consent. This attractive picture, though it survived the Korean episode, was wrecked by the Tibetan aggression. As M. R. Masani, a member of the Indian Parliament from Nehru's own Congress party, has just written:

"By its one stroke in Tibet, the Chinese Communists have cut Asia in two, and have awakened us from that illusory dream of an Asian third force which some of us have held. There is now a free Asia and a slave Asia."^{*}

^{*} The New Leader, Dec. 11, 1950.

Whether Mr. Masani's political chief has been thoroughly awakened, to the point of renouncing his third-force dreams, remains to be seen.

THE threat to India in Mao's march into Tibet is clear. External encouragement of the subversive activities of Indian Communists in Assam, West Bengal, United Province, Hyderabad and South India may be expected to force the government of India to adopt more vigorous repressive measures against Indian Communists. These, in their turn, will expose India to the danger of civil wars in various parts of the country, as was the case in China during the early days of the Communists' effort to organize their own army and state.

Nehru will have to make one of two choices, each of which would force him to follow a more rigid and consistent line than he has hitherto adopted. Under attack from the left, he would either have to seek the support of the right wing of his Congress Party and other rightist groups and close collaboration with the United States, or he would have to woo the Soviets and the Chinese Communists. In the latter case, Nehru might find himself leading India towards partnership in a Soviet

Russian-Chinese-Indian combination in world politics which would facilitate the Communization of all Asia.

If Nehru tries to adopt any such policy, he will meet with opposition from the right wing of his own party — opposition so vigorous that it may topple him from his position as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Recent events have proved that Nehru is no longer the undisputed ruler of the Congress Party. Although Mr. Tandon, the present president of the Congress Party, is opposed to Nehru's foreign and domestic policies, he was elected by an overwhelming majority this September. Even leading members of the Congress Party in Nehru's cabinet will be likely to oppose him if he seeks closer collaboration with Soviet Russia and Communist China.

He is also threatened by defections if he fails to solve India's difficulties with Pakistan over the Hindu refugees and over the future of Kashmir. While such domestic Indian questions may seem remote to an American reader, they are of importance at least to the extent that they throw light on Nehru's essential character.

It is not too well known in this country how many millions of persons — at least ten million

Hindus and five or six million Moslems — have been tragically affected by the partition of India. Nor is there any understanding here of the fact that more thoughtful Indians have begun to believe that the partition was neither necessary nor basically beneficial. In destroying the economic unity of the subcontinent, it has left India with a shortage of food and raw materials, and imposed on both India and Pakistan the burden of large standing armies.

On all these issues, which are at the heart of India's internal difficulties, Nehru has played the same vacillating, unrealistic, sentimental role as in his conduct of foreign affairs. Here, too, he has been incapable of taking decisive action and has sought always to avoid conflicts at any cost. He has made compromise after compromise with principles he advocates in theory and, despite his high ideals, can be — and is — rightly accused of being an inveterate appeaser.

Nehru had originally been opposed to partition but when the Moslem League threatened "rivers of blood" and the British Government added the weight of its support, Nehru became one of the chief architects of the division. He rationalized his reversal by asserting

that partition alone could save India from internal strife. A clearer-eyed prophet — one who is effective as well as good — might well have foreseen the vast refugee problem and the communal massacres that followed directly upon partition.

Nehru is known to be particularly eager to have Kashmir remain an integral part of India, and indeed the government of Kashmir had legally and officially joined the Indian union. Yet when the Pakistan army invaded Kashmir in 1947 and the Indian army was ready and clearly able to drive out the invading forces, it was Nehru who insisted on a cease-fire. It was one more expression of his apparent deficiency on realism.

In the economic area he has been no less inconsistent — one is tempted to say confused. Committing himself on vague socialist grounds to nationalization of India's heavy industry, Nehru succeeded in discouraging much-needed investment of foreign capital. At the same time, ironically, his government has failed to control the enormous profits made by rapacious Indian industrialists, many of whom engage in black marketing.

Americans who have watched Nehru's admixture of idealism and poor judgment without benefit of romantic glasses are

sometimes reminded, not unnaturally, of Henry A. Wallace. It is said, in fact, that Nehru is a great admirer of the former Vice-President, and of the pro-Soviet policy Wallace so vigorously espoused. During his American visit, Nehru went out of his way to confer at length with Wallace, apparently to obtain his views on world affairs.

Wallace has now altered his stand on Soviet imperialism and Red China. Will Nehru, too, see the light? Can he summon up a new clarity, a new realism, to replace his vague good intentions? Can he stop India from drifting towards internal chaos and from external collaboration with the very forces dedicated to its destruction as a truly independent state? Can he yet make India — geopolitically so significant to Asia and the globe — a true bulwark of world peace and Asian independence?

IF THE ANSWERS for which mankind, and Indians especially, are waiting should be in the negative, Nehru may ultimately join the company of Benes, Masaryk and others who toyed with the delusions of third-force appeasements of the unappeasable Politburo. Without denying him any portion of the admiration to which he is en-

titled for his goodness, Americans would be well advised never to lose sight of his chronic lack of effectiveness.

The sad truth is that Nehru's foreign policies have so far been liabilities to the cause of freedom and world peace. With India's borders menaced by the Communist invasion of Tibet, with Peiping following Moscow

orders in refusing to accept the "cease-fire in Korea" resolution advanced by India and other Asian nations, it is tempting to credit strong rumors that Nehru is revising his policies and moving toward cooperation with the United States. Let us hope that the rumors are true, and not a mirage of wishful thinking on our part.

"The United States . . . must not be incapacitated by its Constitution to prepare for defence before it is actually invaded. The ceremony of a formal declaration of war has fallen into disuse; yet here we are being committed to receiving the blow before we can even prepare for it. (We must) . . . anticipate distant danger, and meet the gathering storm. We must (not) expose our property and our liberty to the mercy of foreign invaders, and invite them by our weakness to seize the naked and defenceless prey."

— HAMILTON in *The Federalist*.

Execution at Dawn

Note: Anent Korea and mass executions in the Orient, here is a lesson from a master:

THE DISARMED MEN were standing in line on the barely visible expanse of snow against the greenish dawn. "Communists, leave ranks!" Death, they knew. Two-thirds of the battalion had advanced. "Take off your coats." "Dig the pit." They had dug. Slowly, for the ground was frozen. The White Guards, a revolver in each hand (the shovels might become weapons), uneasy and impatient, were waiting, to right and left — the center empty because of the machine-guns leveled at the prisoners. The silence was limitless, vast as the snow that stretched out as far as the eye could reach. Only the clods of earth fell with a brittle sound, more and more hurried. In spite of death, the men were hurrying to get warm. Several had begun to sneeze. "That's good now. Halt!" They turned round. Behind them, beyond their comrades, women, children and old men from the village were herded, scarcely clad, wrapped

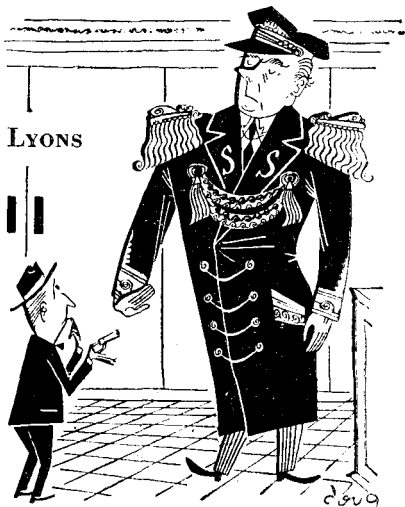
in blankets, mobilized to witness the example. Many were turning their heads, as though they were trying not to look, but they were fascinated by horror. "Take off your trousers!" For uniforms were scarce. Many hesitated, because of the women. "Take off your trousers!"

The wounds appeared, one by one, bandaged with rags: the machine-guns had fired low and almost all were wounded in the legs. Many folded their trousers, although they had thrown their cloaks. They formed a line again, on the edge of the pit this time, facing the machine-guns, pale on the snow: flesh and shirts. Bitten by the cold, they were now sneezing uncontrollably, one after the other, and those sneezes were so intensely human, in that dawn of execution, that the machine-gunners, instead of firing, waited — waited for life to become less indiscreet. At last they decided to fire.

— ANDRÉ MALRAUX

My Battle with the Shubert Brothers

BY LEONARD LYONS



IN SELECTING the Messrs. Shubert as targets in a civil anti-trust suit, the United States government will find the battle-lines drawn by two men of unique power, long experience, and firm resolve. The courts — eventually — will determine whether or not Lee and J. J. Shubert constitute a monopoly; but, regarding the scope of their domination, when stories I once published displeased them I was forthwith barred from most of the New York theatres. The doormen they employed were alerted, and I was *Verboten* — not permitted to buy a ticket, or use one presented to me, for admission to any showplace owned, leased or operated by the Shuberts' Select Theaters Corporation and/or its subsidiaries.

The stories which upset them

so much concerned some novel methods they introduced to trim the terrifying costs of Broadway productions. I playfully suggested that their singular economy program required that the props be stored, whenever scenes were eliminated from shows which were too long, and new productions built around this salvage. I reported that when Fanny Brice's routine, in which she sang a song while holding an apple, was ordered cut from a musical, Nicky Blair, the night club operator, had asked Mr. J. J. Shubert: "What-

are you going to do with the apple — produce *William Tell*?"

In describing a Will Morrissey production - song, a specialty number in which the chorus girls were to toss cotton balls at the audience, I mentioned that it was deemed unacceptable by the Shuberts unless Mr. Morrissey wrote another song to make the audience toss the cotton balls right back. After I had published two more stories in this genre, the axe fell and it was all over between me and the Shubert theatres.

At first I shrugged off the ban. At the only occasion when I broke bread with Lee Shubert, I assured him that inasmuch as I was blessed with a good wife, sturdy children, a happy home and the job and friends I wanted, my inability to buy a ticket to or enter any of his theatres would have no lasting effect upon the course of my life. But then, in the ensuing four years during which the ban against me continued, a series of incidents, each insignificant yet compounding into an irritating mass, finally stirred me to take action and seek redress.

The first of these incidents involved the warning that I would not be permitted to see a Harold Rome musical in which, for the first time, my name was used in a song. Aggravation came with

the notification that I could not attend a showing of William Saroyan's *Across the Board on Tomorrow Morning*, in which reference was made to my column. I spent both opening nights brooding at Sardi's nearby, because I learned that I would be given the heave-ho from the theatres if I tried to present the tickets the authors had given me.

My distress, however, was not as acute as Michael Todd's when, on the eve of the Broadway opening of his *Hot Mikado*, he heard his financial sponsor boldly say to Lee Shubert: "Lyons is coming to the show with me, and nobody's going to stop us." While Mr. Shubert still was reciting the dire consequences of such an attempt, and the show's backer kept insisting "Oh no you won't," Mr. Todd made a panicky retreat and sought me out.

Todd made a truly heart-rending plea: "I got a chance to ride big with this one. *Hot Mikado* will be a big hit — my first Broadway hit. But not if you're there." He repeated Mr. Shubert's warning that an extra detail of guards would search the theatre, and that if I were discovered inside the premises then, by God, the curtain would not rise. Todd spoke of his career, and addressed me as Young

Dreamer to Young Dreamer. Then he mentioned his son, and his appeal was as Father to Father.

He showed me a silver dollar, and said it was his last. "If you go to the opening, I'll go broke; if you stay away, I get a chance at the Big Ride," he said. "Please stay away. If you stay away, I'll — I'll even buy you a good hat," was the largesse offered by Michael Todd, who later was to distribute cars and vicuna overcoats to favorite newspapermen. I was duly touched, and stayed away from the premiere. The show was a hit. For the record, incidentally, I never accepted an auto or vicuna overcoat from Mr. Todd. I didn't even get the hat.

OLSEN AND JOHNSON invited me to the opening of *Sons O'Guns* at the Shuberts' Winter Garden Theatre and promised, "We'll see to it that you and your wife get in — and through the front door." I had declined to resort to backstage entry or to disguise, spurning a pattern set by Walter Winchell during his brief war with the Shuberts when he stuffed an Algonquin bathmat underneath his overcoat, donned a long beard and remained silent — pretenses so alien to his characteristics that the Marx Brothers were able to

walk him past the doorman to see their musical, pausing only to make a casual identification: "This is our Uncle Max."

I told Olsen and Johnson that their proposal required mature reflection which, as usual, meant that I would have to ask my wife. "We'll go," she decided, and with indisputable logic added, "If we're thrown out of an Olsen and Johnson musical, everyone will think it's part of the show." And while the comedians deployed against the Shuberts, with maneuvers involving midgets, cannon and air-vents blowing high the skirts of ladies, my wife and I entered and witnessed the spectacle without molestation.

Encouraged by this triumph I conferred with Robert E. Sherwood about the possibility of defying the Shuberts at the premiere of his *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. Mr. Sherwood was amenable. "I'm sure Lincoln would have wanted everyone free, including even columnists," he said, and we walked into the theatre together. The doormen voiced no objection, perhaps because of an awareness that it might be deemed ridiculous to bar a newspaperman from seeing a play about a champion of civil liberties, or perhaps because Mr. Sherwood's towering six-foot seven screened me completely

from their view.

Clare Boothe Luce, however, was unable to get me past the door to see her anti-Nazi play, *Margin For Error*. She and her husband discussed the matter with Lee Shubert, who remained unmoved. The entire cast, headed by Sam Levene and Otto Preminger, then sent a wire to Mr. Shubert registering protest against the ban and declaring that it was an act as totalitarian as those prevalent in the nation which was the villain of the stage piece. Philip Coolidge, who at that time had been replaced in the show, although he later was reinstated, told his colleagues, "Make that wire to Shubert retroactive, and I'll sign it too."

It was to no avail. By way of consolation the cast volunteered to perform the play for me in the living room of my apartment, a gracious gesture which I had to decline, for I was beginning to feel that the principle was more disturbing than my mere failure to see a performance.

At the end of the fourth year of the Shubert ban, I finally consulted my attorney, Morris L. Ernst, for a clarification of my status as a theatre-goer. He found that the only precedent was a suit once instituted by Alexander Woollcott against the Shuberts, who then were sus-

tained by the court in their right to refuse entrance, arbitrarily, to any ticket-holder. "Under the Common Law, which we inherited from England," Mr. Ernst advised me, "the owner or lease-holder has a right to bar anyone from the premises, including places of public assembly, as if it were his own home. The Civil Rights Law makes two exceptions — hotels and restaurants. If you can get the Civil Rights Law to be amended so that it will include theatres . . ."

Some months later, in Lindy's, I met Irwin Davidson, now a judge, who then was an Assemblyman. He agreed to introduce the amendment to the Civil Rights Law at the next session of the New York State Legislature. My attorney drafted the legislation and Assemblyman Davidson introduced it. It was killed in committee, Mr. Davidson reported, because of a powerful lobby representing the motion picture theatres.

I was not prepared, as yet, to wage a two-front battle, and requested my attorney to re-draft the proposed legislation to make it applicable only to legitimate theatres. Mr. Davidson introduced this revised legislation, but despite the withdrawal of the movie lobby, again it was killed in committee.

We devised new strategy. Irwin Davidson is an accomplished dialectician who always had been called upon to entertain at the annual dinners of the State legislators. Now, for the first time, he notified the program committee that they would have to count him out. Nor would he entertain at any more of these dinners, he vowed, unless his colleagues released the bill from its pigeonhole and permitted the Legislature to vote upon it.

The Deal was arranged: Davidson told his dialect stories at the dinner, the bill was released and finally the New York State Assembly voted on it favorably.

Lieutenant Governor Charles Poletti steered its passage through the Senate, and then it

was sent to Governor Lehman for approval. As soon as the Governor signed the bill, Mr. Poletti telephoned from the Executive Mansion to notify me that it was now law, and that I was being sent the pen with which Governor Lehman had affixed his signature, together with a blue-sealed document attesting to its import.

At long last I was free to stride securely up to the box office of the Shubert Theatre on West 44th Street, to buy two tickets to the show whose curtain was about to rise. I offered the tickets to the doorman, who politely honored them and permitted my wife and me to enter. We were seated, saw the first two acts, thought the show stank, and walked out.

"Only a relatively small number of Americans would assert that there are no spiritual values in our governmental system. But those who continuously endeavor to keep such values bright are scarcely more numerous. The majority, in all probability the great majority, of contemporary Americans are indifferent to their heritage."

— FELIX MORLEY in *The Power in the People*.

In Our Readers' Opinion

Herewith some pertinent reflections after reading "The Americanization of Emily:" "Be not deceived: neither fornicators nor adulterers shall possess the kingdom of God."

JOHN J. SHEEKEY
LA SALLE COLLEGE

Shades of H. L. Mencken. Let's go after 'em again. There's more material than ever; it's a 12-month open season.

T. H. CHRISCHILLES
ALGONA, IOWA

I wish to make a suggestion. Inasmuch as our boys in Korea are fighting and suffering to protect us, I think it is about time for us to do our share to back them up. I suggest that all U. S. Government employees who are on a 40-hour week be obliged to work forty-four hours at no additional pay or time off for that additional work.

WILLIAM J. CONROY
BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Congratulations on the opening number of THE NEW MERCURY. American wisdom is at a low mark chiefly because we do not try to educate good citizens. Neither parents nor schools make any important effort in that direction. Parents want their children to "be happy" (God save us!), to play like half-wits until they are well into their twenties.

A. T. CURTIS
NEEDHAM, MASS.

I read your ad in THE NEW YORKER and believe you have a good idea if you can handle it. It is all right to condemn Communism because to all Americans this means Russia, but actually the greatest agency for the promotion of Communism in America is our own government, and most people would rather be well-fed slaves than starving free men. So, look out. I am warning you.

DONALD DAVIDSON
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

If you successfully follow the dictates of the credo in your first issue, you will be doing the nation a tremendous service. I have carried on a life-long, private Watch and Ward Society for the Suppression of Commonness. For my efforts I have been reviled, pitied and derided to such an extent that I have had to resort to psychiatric treatment in order to

gain confidence not only in myself, but in mass motives and thinking.

WINSLOW GIBSON, SAN FRANCISCO
(*Self-appointed President of the
Non-Existent Anti-Hypocrisy
League of America*)

I had the same experiences (as James Forrestal) and can speak authoritatively, having been held almost three years (in confinement), at which time I attended my grandmother's funeral, took off for Texas, got a job, passed a civil service examination, with physical and police examinations, passed and obtained a Texas driving license, attended church, wrote many letters, received a \$30 raise, and paid my poll tax.

WILLIAM R. HUNTER
DALLAS, TEXAS

Your two statements have taken my breath away! Great Heavens, where have you been during the past twenty eventful years? Why has not your voice been heard before? Welcome, stranger, to the battleground for human values and not the market grandstand of slaves.

J. ANTHONY MARCUS
NEW YORK, N. Y.

THE MERCURY is backed by the notorious Chiang Kai-shek lobby headed by a certain Mr. Kohlberg whose main mission in life seems to be to get the United States into a war with China for his lost paradise of profits based on coolie labor.

THE DAILY WORKER

The magazine is marred by an extraordinary article about English women in the last war and their alleged subservience to the all-conquering American male equipped with nylons, lipsticks, perfume, oranges, and hams.

Mr. Huie could spell his name Hooley.

THE LONDON DAILY MAIL

May I ask you to have your circulation department stop sending me two copies of the magazine — one to my home address, one to my office. I need only one, and I have had a decreasing amount of pleasure in reading it.

MR. ALFRED CROFTS
DENVER, COLORADO

In Our Readers' Opinion

In Our
Readers'
Opinion

For the brilliant statement of THE NEW AMERICAN MERCURY's admirable objectives I applaud.

For incredible stupidity in picking the wrongest possible editorial head for reaching those objectives, I allow my subscription to lapse.

JULIAN F. SMITH, U. S. NAVY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Nathan and Devoe are fine. It is far better to read an intelligent account of the acting of Katherine Hepburn or the doings of a chipmunk than to peruse the bigotry of South haters or the effusions of deluded one-worlders who are hell-bent on liquidating the U. S. A.

LYLOYD E. PRICE
FORT WORTH, TEXAS

There are not many jokers — funny, practical or poisonous — who can get my goat with stuff they write, but I've finally located a person who rates it. His name is William Bradford Huie.

Huie can have my buck today, because I've just finished reading some crowing he proudly mailed me — his most incredible article. When he presumes readers will swallow his "Untold Facts in the Forrestal Case" without challenge, Huie attributes to the public the mind of a sieve.

FRANK FARRELL
NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
AND THE SUN

The piece most likely to start your new magazine off on the right key is, in my estimation, "Don Quixotes Without Windmills" by Robert Lowry. We've had about more than enough of DP's and war trials. Likewise, a good stunt might be to put on a belly-band with the caption: NOT A WORD ON THE A-BOMB!

WILLIAM ABSOLOM
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Please cancel my subscription. I don't know what the hell THE NEW MERCURY is all about.

WILLIAM BLISS
PRESTON, IDAHO

My husband has been editor and publisher of the daily newspaper here for over 30 years and in that time we have

raised four children, trying to instill in them many such ideas as you set forth in your advertisement, and I feel sure your new magazine will be a pleasure for the Arnold family to read.

CAROLINE ARNOLD
MADISONVILLE, KY.

I did not like the article, "The Americanization of Emily" — therefore I am not renewing my subscription until I can be sure that such articles are not the general policy of the magazine. This contribution may have been a slip, as some of the other articles were most commendable, but I am waiting to see before I renew.

REVEREND JOHN CASS
RECTORY
SAINT IGNATIUS MARTYR
LONG BEACH, NEW YORK

Congratulations on Forrestal piece. My neighborhood news-dealer has put THE NEW AMERICAN MERCURY behind the counter to protect regular customers as so many strangers are asking for your mag.

CHARLES HODGES
NEW YORK, N. Y.

Sunday a friend came over and threw the NEW AMERICAN MERCURY in my lap. After reading the publisher's statement and "In the Mercury's Opinion" my feelings were aroused. Our house was like the jubilee day that Sir Thomas Browne speaks of in "Urn Burial."

Too bad we can't have "In the Mercury's Opinion" privately printed and discharged from planes at several key points over the country. A lot of high octane characters might be given a rude awakening.

HARLAND RISTAU
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Such people as you should be transferred to some island with no access of escape. Do you know a moron? If not, just stand before the glass.

MRS. GRACE KRUSE
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CAL.

I am deeply in love with the NEW MERCURY.

HELEN HASKIN
NEW YORK, N. Y.

In Our Readers' Opinion

CONFESSIONS OF A WAR LACKEY

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF LIEUTENANT
COMMANDER JAMES MONROE MADISON,
USNR

IN THE SECOND WAR, at one time or another, either as a civilian correspondent or during the two-and-one-half years I was in the Navy, I was on every major front except the Russian. I saw as much of "the war" as any man, yet I contributed nothing to the actual fighting. I belonged to the Sixth Column, that army of war-rich Americans — writing men, radio men, picture men, influence men, confidence men, yes men, aides, procurers, technicians, observers, rear echelon experts, USO, OWI, OSS, Red Cross, VIPS — many of whom only went along for the ride and most of whom "enjoyed the war."

There were a few occasions when men died near me. There were days when the food was off the Waldorf standard. There were a few nights when I slept in my clothes. But any suggestion that I experienced hardship or excessive danger would be hypocrisy. Generally I was my own boss; I went where I pleased; I lived in luxury hotels; I rode in expensive airplanes and automobiles usually provided by the American taxpayer; I ate in black market cafes; I drank excellent whiskey; I had attractive women; I told and heard some good stories; and I was overpaid.

Even while I was in the Navy I was free, comfortable, and overpaid because I was an admiral's companion. At thirty-four, with my experience and no military training, I was presumed to be unfit for combat — yet I was subject to the draft; so, despite my own efforts to avoid it, I became a sort of gold-braided equerry. I was a combination social secretary, procurer, barkeep, press agent, court jester, and traveling companion for the Admiral. I wasn't in public relations — a few of those chaps worked at useful jobs. Nor was I the Admiral's official aide — I didn't have that much responsibility. I was only the Admiral's social com-

panion; a member of his entourage; one of his "side boys." I traveled around with the Admiral in our special airplanes and automobiles, handled the wine mess, shopped for his wife and daughter, procured women for our parties, played the piano, told funny stories, and paid most of the bills that couldn't be pushed off on Uncle Sam. Moreover, I helped put the Admiral on the radio and in the newsreels, wrote nice speeches for him, wrote articles about him in the magazines, even wrote a book or so about how he and his outfit were winning the goddam war. The books had tremendous sales — everything sold during the war — so, what-the-hell, I could afford to pay the entertainment bills.

The Admiral, in his early fifties, was a likeable old bureaucrat. Life to him had been a contest between himself and the penny-pinching Taxpayer. As other men wrestle with Fate, the Admiral had wrestled with the Taxpayer. All his life the Taxpayer had had the better of him. The Taxpayer had cut his pay and allowances; the Taxpayer had delayed his promotions; the Taxpayer had denied comforts to himself, his wife, and his daughter. Now the war had turned the tables on Mr. Taxpayer. The war had given

the Admiral the upper hand; and the Admiral regarded the war as his supreme opportunity to wrest from the Taxpayer all the rank, privileges, power, and comforts which he deserved.

He liked for me to sit and talk with him while he lay in bed. One night in London, after a party in our maharajah's suite at the Dorchester Hotel, he talked a long time. We had both been drinking and I was sleepy, but he kept me sitting there on the other bed while he rambled.

"By god, Jimmie," he said, "we sure spend old Taxpayer's money, don't we? But goddam it, I figure I got it coming to me. Ever since I left the Academy the goddam Taxpayer has kept me and my family ragged-assed. You know how long I was a goddam two-striper? Eight goddam years! I never had a goddam pot. But now I'm getting my breaks. You stick with me, Jimmie, and help me get on top. Put my picture in a few more magazines. After this war I ought to be worth a hundred thousand goddam dollars a year to some buncha bastuds that's selling something to the government. You stick with me, Jimmie. You're my friend. You help me get up there, boy, and, by god, when this war is over I'll look after you."

When I went into my own room and crawled into the luxurious bed, I couldn't sleep. I got up and got a drink and sat on the side of the bed in my pajamas in the darkness. I had pulled back the blackout curtains for air, and outside in the park I could see shadowy figures around the rocket battery. "Goddam it," I thought, "I wish to hell I could have spent this war around an AA gun with a few stupid bastards who are losing instead of winning. I wish I could know more folks to whom this war is a catastrophe and less folks to whom it's an opportunity." I drained the glass and crawled back between the covers. "Oh, what-the-hell," I thought. "Why should I worry? When the war is over the Admiral can give me twenty thousand a year as his public relations adviser and I can stay drunk and lie on a beach the rest of my life."

I HAD had little choice in the service. I had wanted, if possible, to escape boredom and cynicism. I had known the Admiral in Hawaii before the war when he was a captain. As soon as he learned that the draft was reaching for me, he took steps to attach me to himself. If I had escaped him, I still would have wound up as

somebody's press agent and procurer. Practically every admiral or general with as many as three stars had his own personal press agent and writer, and too many knew me for me to escape.

My Admiral liked me because I helped make him feel good and look good — because I contributed to his self-esteem, to his chances of promotion and of landing a rich sinecure after the war. Whether we were in London, Cherbourg, Naples, Casablanca, Cairo, Honolulu or Manila, I usually managed to get the best hotel suites for our party, the choicest liquors, the best food, the most desirable women. When a slick magazine, with some assistance from me, ran the Admiral's picture in four colors on the front cover, he wouldn't have traded me for a new battleship. And the day I persuaded Hollywood to make a picture about his outfit — hell, I could have had half the fleet.

The Admiral liked me, too, because I can play the piano. A good piano player is as necessary in a first-class war as he is in a first-class bordello. The

In the December issue of THE MERCURY one of the most popular pieces was "The Americanization of Emily," also from the memoirs of Commander Madison. The complete memoirs will be published as a book by THE MERCURY in the Fall of 1951.

Admiral liked *The Blue Danube*, *It's a Grand Old Flag*, and *God Bless America*. At our parties, whenever I wasn't playing these tunes, he kept me busy telling his favorite stories. A man who can play the piano, tell funny stories, and pay the bills — he's a goddam handy man for an admiral to have around.

I did what I could to save myself from cynicism. I supported the war as a writer. My book about the hopeful young warrior from the Tennessee Valley was published in 1940. Then I wrote many magazine articles and one more serious book besides my war books. I made a lecture tour. I praised Roosevelt and Churchill and tried to present the war as noble and necessary and good. I didn't exhort the home folks to greater effort and sacrifice; I only reported and maintained that the war was for high purpose. I was in a poor position to exhort other men to work or fight or sacrifice; and this worried me but gradually I became philosophical about it.

I didn't dislike the Admiral. I understood him and rather liked him most of the time. He had been an ordinary boy off a Midwestern farm, and he had spent most of his life in what to me is dull, bureaucratic routine. His skill was equal, at

least, to that of his German or Japanese opposite. The war to him was an opportunity involving two contests. The secondary contest was the one with the Germans and Japanese. He never doubted the outcome of this — simply a question of waiting long enough for Sufficient American Production plus Adequate Transport to equal Victory. The primary contest was the one between himself and his rivals in the Navy, Army and Air Force. It was in this contest that he needed me to help him win the power, prestige, credit and post-war sinecure that he wanted.

Nor was I embittered by my lackeying for the Admiral. By choice I had avoided the military bureaucracy in my life — I even pulled strings to avoid having to "put on the monkey suit and drill" when I was in college. I had never bothered to learn to march in step; bodies of men marching in step don't thrill me; they depress me. So when the nation needed men who could march in step, what could I expect to do other than place myself at the disposal of the military professionals? And if they found me fitted only for lackeying, then a lackey I had to be.

This philosophy, I admit, provided little comfort during

my shopping expeditions. The Admiral had a twenty-two-year-old daughter and a forty-five-year-old wife. I never met them but I knew them well. I carried photographs of them; I had records of their height, weight, hair color, eye color, dress size, chemise size, glove size, shoe size — and I could recite in my sleep the measurements around their busts and their seats. I had all this information because one of my high-priority assignments was to search the world for exotic fabrics and garments for these two women.

Whenever the Admiral and I landed, while he and other men got on with the war Lieutenant-Commander James Monroe Madison got on with the shopping. I'd commandeer the best automobile and chauffeur and comb the countryside, not only for choice food and drink and women, but also for the best remaining values in fabrics. While other men were deciding the Battle for Africa I was in a Moroccan market deciding whether there was enough seat room in a pair of houri pajamas for the Admiral's daughter.

Traveling eastward over the Atlantic I always had excess baggage allowances to cover our stock of whiskey, lipsticks, powder, nail varnish, girdles

and rare foods. The nylon stockings I picked up in the Azores. And traveling westward we had stocks of linens, tweeds, silks, and perfume for the Admiral's two women.

ONCE, on Omaha Beach, I had a nightmare. I could see two bare female rumps before me. One, massive — obviously the Admiral's wife; the other trim — the Admiral's daughter. I thought I was charging frantically around the earth as if on a treadmill, snatching fabrics from bazaar tables as I ran, and reaching desperately out trying to cover those two white rumps. And when I finally covered them and stopped to regain my breath and strength, it was the end of the war and I could see myself being decorated before a drawn-up host. The decorating officer was French. He read a citation:

"For skill and devotion over and above the call of duty . . . for searching a war-blasted world for exquisite fabrics . . . for being able, even among the ruins of civilizations, to find delicate coverings — always in the proper seat-size — for two *derrières* dear to his ad-mir-AL . . . for all this, Comman-dere Madi-zohn, I honor you in the name of mankind."

The decorating officer then

pinned on my breast two golden rumps — one massive; the other trim — and smacked me on both cheeks.

But, what-the-hell, I suppose somebody had to do the Admiral's shopping. He knew how to make war; I didn't. If he fought while I shopped, I suppose the Taxpayer got value received. And he was appreciative. When he got letters from his wife and daughter thanking him for the tweeds, silks, and linens, he'd read them to me. " 'Daddy, how could you have known exactly what colors look best on me? They're perfectly wonderful!' " Then he'd beam and say: "Thank you, Jimmie. You're doing a grand job."

At any rate the Admiral and his entourage were my buncha bastuds, so I gave them my loyalty and performed my assignments with what skill I possess. Maybe that *is* democracy. Maybe wars are won by an admiral's having had a luxurious bed, fine wine, stimulating women, and the thanks of his wife and daughter for exotic gifts. Maybe procurers are as necessary to victory as are infantrymen. Maybe it was I, after all, who won the goddam war.

All that I can add in my defense is that I never believed or pretended I was important

in the Second War. While I was a correspondent I never spent three days with a combat unit and then pretended that I had "shared the hardships of the fighting men." I never regarded as my due all the courtesies extended to me by the armies, navies and air forces of Britain and America; I never arrogated to myself the privilege of "speaking for the GI's;" and I never sat in New York night clubs and pontificated about what I said to "Winston" and what he said to me.

While I was in the Navy I never asked an enlisted man to carry a bag for me; I avoided the saluting procedure whenever possible; I didn't "chew out" any Seabees for not having my bath water hot; and I never allowed myself to be photographed with a weapon in my hand. When I sat in an officers club on a remote island drinking whiskey while the men manning the guns had nothing to drink, or when I shacked up with a USO girl in an area where the fighting men hadn't had a woman for a year, I always felt a waft of regret that war and life are this way whether in a democracy or under a dictatorship of the proletariat.

When, near the end, I learned that the Admiral was getting the Legion of Merit for me, I

went to him and said: "Sir, I appreciate your recommendation for the Legion of Merit, but I wish you'd withdraw it."

"I don't understand, Jimmie," he said. "Sit down. You deserve the Legion of Merit. You're a goddam good American. You've served this command faithfully and well. Besides you're my personal friend. You've helped look after me and I'm looking after you."

"That's very kind, sir," I said. "But seven generations of my folks have borne arms honorably in the United States of America. They've won their share of medals, but they have always won them for killing the enemy, for 'heroism and devotion over and beyond the call of duty.' In this war maybe I've served honorably, but I'd rather not be decorated for it."

He refused to take me seri-

ously; in fact, there was irritation in his voice as he said: "You got nothing to be ashamed of, Jim. It takes all kinds of men to fight a modern war. You deserve the Legion of Merit. For me to withdraw my recommendation now would be embarrassing for both of us. So we'll say no more about it."

No more was said about it. On a June day in 1945 on Okinawa, while a company of battle-weary Marines stood at attention, the Admiral himself pinned the Legion of Merit on the breast of Lieutenant-Commander James Monroe Madison, USNR, for distinguished service to his country and to the cause of liberty. I felt uncomfortable, for I knew that down in the red clay of South Georgia some tough old scrappers named Madison were turning over in their graves.

"Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. . . . A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government."

— MADISON in *The Federalist*.

NIGHT OVER SOUTH AFRICA

BY ROBERT DE KOCH

Cape Town

FEAR LIES OVER this country. Rulers and ruled — both are afraid. Our anxiety is not, of course, entirely new; South Africa, for quite apparent demographic reasons, has long been an anxious spit of land. Of late, however, a new tone, an extra twist, has been added to our restiveness. The new ingredient dates from the burial last year of South Africa's old Prime Minister, Jan Smuts, and its name is paranoia.

Until Smuts guttered out, things had remained fairly well in hand. It was possible, by keeping one's eyes fixed exclusively on the Prime Minister's markedly noble figure, to believe that history's clear threat to South Africa would never come to anything. Marshall Smuts' reassurance quotient was, after all, remarkably high — his ministers vied to serve him;

he was by way of being the darling of European chancelleries; his philosophy of Holism appeared both benign and workable. Then Smuts died, and into bold relief, along with the revelation that Holism had long since become outmoded, sprang Daniel Malan and his Nationalist government, sprang Malan's most enthusiastic backers, the Broederbunders, sprang the *tsotsis*. Bundled together, these phenomena account for South Africa's current psychosis.

This new national mood is best sampled in Johannesburg — particularly after dark, when the *tsotsi* gangs roam. The *tsotsi* is the Johannesburg equivalent of the Harlem hoodlum, but with a difference. The difference is that the *tsotsi* never for a moment forgets, probably not even in his dreams, that he is black and that he has been allotted the outermost periphery

of Malan's Afrikaner cosmos. Thus the *tsotsi's* every criminal act has a sophisticated racist base. Arson, robbery, assault — the *tsotsi* practices them all and all for the identical, smoldering reason. This is not lost on the whites who occupy the fine houses that make up Johannesburg's suburbs. The appearance at night of their handsome residences indicates how well they understand what the *tsotsi* has in mind and how clearly they see where Malan is leading South Africa. Come darkness in Johannesburg, all houses are barred and shuttered and fierce dogs are loosed to stalk the adjoining yards. This is also the hour for winding the alarm systems and setting the trap wires — a ghoulish parody of eventide behavior in less beset regions of the West, where the purgher signals his faith in the night by winding the clock and putting the cat out.

These necessities seen to, the Johannesburg burgher, further protected by the best iron grating that money can buy (the ornamental iron bar industry has been developed to a breathtaking peak of perfection here) is braced for the night. As an example of national paranoia, tastefully expressed, the nighttime front presented by the Johannesburg whites is prob-

ably the most perfect thing of its kind since the Nazis — a comparison that would probably reduce Mr. Malan, were he to hear of it, to a wobbly mass of modest demurrer.

Life is grayer in nearby Pretoria, for things are on the move there. They aren't very pleasant things, to be sure, being largely commercial and legislative indications of the future as envisioned by the Nationalists. Still, the Pretorians like the noise, and are inclined to identify it with progress. Culture, they seem to be saying, is most earnest and money most interesting. Theirs, one senses them thinking, theirs the privilege of being in on the ground floor of the Christian-Nationalist Republic, of living unencumbered by wrought-iron fences, of giving the back of their hands to the nine million Negroes and Asiatics (not to mention the apprehensive English and Jewish minorities) who have found themselves without tickets to Malan's pure-Afrikaner amphitheatre. Theirs, too, the most ghastly privilege of all — the honor of housing the central offices of the Broederbund, the secret Afrikaner society whose members dominate Malan's Nationalist government.

Who would understand South Africa today must understand

the Broederbund. A knowledge of Afrikaner is, of course, helpful, but the only thing positively needed — and this brand of knowledge abounds in the West — is an understanding of Nazism.

THE first aspect of the Society likely to strike a familiar chord in the observer is its historical costuming. It is rich stuff, composed of strands yanked from the most glorious and appealing sectors of South African cultural and historical heritage, among them the idyllic Boer Republic of Paul Kruger, and John Calvin's theocratic government in Geneva. This sort of thing, as Hitler demonstrated, makes for very heady mass reactions; this is an appeal to a people's innards, and the lesser Afrikaners are probably to be in some measure forgiven for the vigor of their response to the Broederbund pageant.

Here are some of the things that the Broederbund has been up to behind the Kruger-Calvin tapestry: It has put together a little moral thought-control pamphlet (issued, significantly enough, over the signatures of two ministers of the Nationalist government) titled "Christian National Education," which is chiefly noteworthy for its attitude toward non-Calvinists,

who are seen as "nothing else than a deadly danger," and for its new, pocket-size definition of the word Christian, which now turns out to mean adhering to the creeds of the Afrikaner churches; it has labored mightily to substitute Afrikaans for English as the language of business, a displacement that would be culturally questionable and politically sinister; it has elevated to the level of a national slogan the Broederbunder's cry of *Apartheid! Apartheid!* (apartness! apartness!) — thereby providing yet another proof of the Broederbunder's resemblance to the Nazi, with his mad cry of *Jude! Jude!*; through its members in Parliament, it wages tireless war on the existing franchise laws, the ultimate object being (and considerable progress has been made along this line) the disenfranchisement of all non-Afrikaners.

Offhand, one would say that such a program could only be the handiwork of mortals possessed of a splendid diabolism. But history has again disappointed, having once more willed — again as in the case of the Nazis — to work its evil through low comedy figures, for the melancholy truth is that the Broederbunders are lower-case rascals, creatures endowed with, at best, a second-rate social and

political concupiscence. No Machiavellis here. Misplaced farceurs, rather. President Malan, for instance — superficially, a most unwholesome figure, a pretender to first-class political venality. But the fellow is flawed, daubed with the irrevocable stain of comedy, having been born — as his detractors are ever pleased to point out — on a farm called *Alles Verloren*. Clearly, such a man is destined to know the sting of the cat-call.

Malan's principal aides are even less prepossessing. His right bower, Mr. Johannes Strydom, for all his noisy, mainly anti-Semitic, demagogy, is forever cursed by the fact that he was at one time an unsuccessful ostrich farmer. Then there is Doctor Verwoerd, who, as director of Broederbund propaganda, must be accorded first place among these racist comedians. Thanks to the Doctor, South Africans are privileged to sit in on a unique field-stripping of the English language, a phenomenon that is best observed in speeches by Mr. Strydom, who would appear to be feeling his way toward a completely airborne vocabulary. All words smacking of texture and substance, Strydom's speeches indicate, must go, leaving only such excellent pure - Afrikaner

abstractions as Action, Strength, Resolution, and Rock-Fast Convictions.

But despite the patent absurdity of the Broederbund thinking and despite the comic aspects of the men who mouth it, the Society won't be gone from the South African scene tomorrow, or even the day after that, and the reasons for its endurance are easily singled out. The fear has already been mentioned; it has always been on hand, just as the black and coffee-colored millions who inspire it have always been around, waiting for someone — the Broederbunders, as it turns out — to utilize their presence for the development of a national insanity.

Second to fear is the attitude of the South African business community, both Afrikaner and English. For the most part, the traders don't greatly care for President Malan and his friends, but — well, business at the moment is awfully good. The Broederbunders may indeed be sinister clowns, and worse, but it is nevertheless a glorious fact that throughout the land the turbines are humming, the earth is rendering up in handsome fashion, and the pound sterling is accruing in a measure acceptable to all. In short, gen-

eral prosperity pardoneth all — a pity, because the business community is clearly the only group capable of heading off the Broederbunders.

THAT leaves the job of crowding the Broederbunders to the rail up to a triumvirate that includes the United Party (Marshall Smuts' principal support), the Catholic Church, and the Courts. Unfortunately — for this is South Africa, where nothing is quite as sound as it appears to be — this trio isn't anywhere near as formidable as one would suppose. Of the three, the United Party is the greatest disappointment, mainly because of its imposing past. As noted, it was Smuts' party. But now it is J. G. N. Strauss' party, wherein its current feebleness, for Mr. Strauss, though an amiable man and an earnest man and all the rest, is a leader who does not lead. He has failed utterly to consolidate the forces available to him, which include — in addition to his inherited supporters, most of whom are English — many of the troubled black leaders and not a few rich and restive Afrikaners. The result is that the United Party is now an almost sure bet to remain forever out of power.

The Catholic Church has ex-

hibited greater awareness than Mr. Strauss has of what is at stake, but its countermeasures are hardly of the stuff calculated to rock the Broederbunders. In one instance, the Church went to court and defended successfully the right of parents to choose their child's school — a blow at racist education. And in another, a priest neatly backhanded the Broederbunders by publicly performing (and getting away with it) an interracial marriage.

As for the Courts, they just might make the difference. In any case, they have so far. Recently, the Supreme and Appeal Courts together have handed down a round dozen anti-Broederbund decisions, including judgments upholding the right to criticize the government and — most heartening of all — a decision invalidating jim-crow on the railroads. One can hardly expect, however, that the Government will be discouraged by Court judgments. Restrictive legislation is, after all, the Broederbunder's life work; there will be other laws, other days in court, and then there is the happy thought (and here the true Broederbunder's eye must flash and gleam) that these worthy judges, these fellows so keen on British and Roman-Dutch law, will one by one be

dying off before so very long.

So they will. And when that happens, the keys to this unhappy land will devolve to the impatient Malan. One pictures the Doctor on that glorious day. One sees him, those keys in hand, moving busily about the land — locking in this racial group, snapping the vault closed on that dangerous thought, flinging open the innermost Broederbund chamber, the one, that is, that contains the champing teams of censors and thought police. But there remains the possibility that someone, or something, will beat President Malan to the draw. There remains the chance that someone possessed of an

even more formidable group of keys — Mao Tse Tung, perhaps — will set in motion ugly forces whose reverberations will quickly reach South Africa and, once there, nudge into the open all the latent hatred and ferocity that the Broederbunders have elected to suppress, rather than ameliorate.

In this connection, one recalls the words of Mr. L. M. Thompson, a historian at Cape Town University. "It will surely be the judgment of history," Mr. Thompson has written, "that we, as a white community, shall have been the prime initiators of our own destruction — first our moral destruction, then physical."

Robert de Koch is the pseudonym of a well-known South African journalist. He is using it on this letter because, the situation being so tense in South Africa, he fears there might be some nasty action taken against him by the Malan government.

The Young Thieves

BY CHANDLER BROSSARD

TO THE SENTIMENTAL victim all thefts are one and all thieves have the same identity under the skin. This is, of course, far from the scientific truth of the matter. There are as many kinds of thefts that are fundamentally different as there are objects to be stolen, and for every situation there is a different kind of thief.

In the alleyways of my childhood, in the city of W., the lives of our group were absorbed by our hierarchy of thievery. Each of us had a certain place in the hierarchy, and you could judge a boy not so much by the company he kept, but more precisely by the crimes he committed. Each boy had his specialty. The most devoted thieves

among us had little time for anything else, but then of course every craft has its selfish requirements.

There were some crimes that were always committed by one person alone, other crimes committed by just two boys together, and still others that seemed created for a group, in which all the members of the hierarchy, the weak and uncertain as well as the strong, could participate. Each type of crime brought out something in a boy, was actually a projection of his real self. The group crimes were preferred by those of us who had a deep need for anonymity. The two-man jobs appealed to those who were always looking (and even now continue to look) for

a partner, and in this way two incomplete boys were united by a crime and a long companionship was formed.

The one-man crimes attracted the bravest and smartest and strangest, those boys who already felt alone in this world and were seeking situations where they could express their loneliness and realize themselves in privacy.

The classic group theft was the raiding of drug stores. Half a dozen of us periodically descended like wolves from the hills on these palaces of variety and stole as much as we could carry away. It was simple: we employed that ancient device, confusion.

Each of us prowled around a different part of the drug store. One boy at the heaping candy tables, another at the cigar counter, a third at the novelty trays, and so on. The poor clerks were completely routed. They could not tell which of us was stealing or buying, and when they turned their backs to one boy to attempt to wait on another, the first boy picked up several items and walked out. Each time the clerks watched one boy to the exclusion of the others, something was stolen. We were there and gone in twenty minutes, our pockets crammed, leaving the clerks

glassy-eyed and trembling.

We always waited quite a while before striking again at the same place. If we had raided more often the drug store staff would certainly have caught on and devised an adequate defense. We understood this. The virgin territory was always the best.

Another traditional group crime was the stealing of fruits and flowers, which we would sell. We scouted through the back-yards of one part of the city to another looking for apple and plum and cherry trees. On these forays we took with us a grocer's push cart to carry away the loot. Pants pockets, under these circumstances, were for dilettantes. We could strip a row of fruit trees with the skill and speed of experienced migrant workers. Any of the boys who stopped to eat while working was swiftly punished. We ate later, and then only what we could not sell.

When we had filled our cart we moved on to the next neighborhood to sell the fruit to gullible housewives, who were sweetly unaware that they were buying the jewels of their neighbors' souls.

The most profitable of these backyard forays were for pussy-willows and flowers. The discovery of several pussywillow

trees was, in our world of miniature values, equivalent to striking oil. We stripped a tree before it had blossomed and the jackets still protected the bud. After we had stripped a tree or two, we went to a hideout in an empty garage and patiently plucked each jacket from each furry bud. Then we went to a nice middle-class section of town and peddled them from door to door as hothouse pussywillows, the very first of the season. Our customers did not suspect a thing. They were enchanted by our rarities.

Our flower raids were generally made at night, and the biggest of them were made on hotel gardens. A few days after a large hotel had planted five hundred or so tulip slips, and the blossoms were just emerging, we swept down on the garden with gunnysacks and hand-spades and dug up every fourth or fifth slip, just as you would decimate an army. Early the next day we were selling them in another part of the city where constricted economies limited flower planting to window boxes or the hothouses of the imagination. I doubt very much if the hotels ever found out just how many people their flowers brought satisfaction to after all.

Probably the most exciting theft we could commit as a

group was robbing the houses of the rich who had gone away for the summer. We were led by the oldest and wisest of our group and we had to plan everything with great care and skill. This too was a crime of the night. We selected our house after several long walks through a particularly soft-bellied territory, rejecting all those houses that seemed too conspicuously situated to fool with. Then one by one each boy cased the house, until we were all familiar with the layout.

At the appointed dark hour, each boy was sneaking through bushes and scaling walls to meet the other boys at the back of the house. A hurried whispered meeting and we were jimmying a window and inside. As soon as we were inside we quickly located a radio and tuned it on the short wave that police cars used. We stationed a boy here to listen to the police dispatcher. If anyone had seen us enter the house and had called the police, we would hear about it immediately and could make our getaway before the scout car reached us.

We cleaned the place from the top floor to the basement, flash-lighting our way amidst the ghostly shrouded furniture, and assembled once more before leaving. Then we all fanned out

and met again later in some boy's basement, where we displayed our prizes and relived the experience. It was not hard to get rid of the stuff, and afterwards we were in spending money for weeks.

Almost anybody, however, can become a wolf by joining a pack, but it takes real stuff to be a wolf alone or with just one other person. At the top of our hierarchy was the single operator, at the bottom the group operator. We placed a high value on individuality even when we did not have it ourselves. We were not old enough yet to turn on the thing we loved most, to join society's war on the individual.

If you were a lone operator you stole cars and sold them to a car fence, or stripped cars where they were parked, broke into apartments through fire escapes, rolled drunks, and if you stayed in crime as you grew older, you pulled small stick-up jobs with a gun. In our particular band only one boy finally did this, and when he did it he stopped being one of us and disappeared into the real adult underworld. We talked about him later on with nostalgia and respect and a little fear. His life was now beyond the empathy of our understanding.

It is as a lone operator that

you become most aware of the esthetic form of a premeditated criminal act. The only difference between this creative form and others is that you live this form. It is not something that exists apart from you in musical notes or words on paper. There is not the safety of distance. Form and content are inextricably one, and it is as if you yourself, for example, and not the fourteen lines, are the sonnet. The demands of this particular art form are stricter than most, and the margin for error almost nonexistent. You can write a clumsy short story and get away with it, but you cannot bungle a crime with very much impunity.

WE PILFERED from grocery stores quite regularly, and the poorer boys among us were expected by their families to make these food thefts a steady supplement to their meager tables. This too was a theft you committed alone. You did the family shopping wearing a raincoat, and when you came out of the store, the paid-for parcels in your arms, your pockets were supposed to be stuffed. If you were smart enough and lucky, you could even get by the cashier with the meat under your shirt.

Those boys who had morning newspaper routes made wholesale raids on the grocery stores.

Our newspaper deliveries were finished around five A.M. and we would go immediately from our routes to a chain grocery store where there lay deposited on the sidewalk a day's supply of food, dropped off during the night by the big delivery trucks. Crates of iced fish, frozen meats, bushels of oranges and apples, stalks of bananas, boxes of cakes and bread — a real cornucopia and all ours for the taking.

Making sure no one was around, we quickly loaded our newspaper bags with the food and then headed back to our newspaper station to revel and gorge ourselves before taking the rest of the food home.

Our newspaper routes also yielded us a rich stream of milk, buttermilk, chocolate milk, eggs, butter and cream, delivered to the doors of our sleeping victims by the milkman in a noisy horse-pulled wagon. All of the boys I knew drank at least a quart of milk a day, and some of them matched this with a pint of cream. We had fine bones and strong teeth, if nothing else.

Among those thefts usually committed by a team of two boys were breaking into parked cars; and robbing flats where the occupant had left his key in the lock on the outside of the door. These were thefts that

were most safely worked with the aid of a lookout.

The flat jobs were fingered by a newsboy who spotted the forgotten door key and took it while delivering his papers. Then he counceled with his other half, the boy he always stole with. They waited a few days before making a move. On the selected day, one of the boys called the doomed flat on the phone, and when no one answered it was fairly certain that the occupant was away and now was the time.

While one boy was entering the flat, the other one was standing somewhere in the hallway keeping watch. If someone was coming he coughed loud as a warning. When they were ready to leave the flat with the stolen goods, one boy went out first to make sure the coast was clear. And in this way, one boy going ahead of the other, they made their getaway through the back entrance of the building.

Most of the boys were too young to sell the stuff in a pawnshop, so we had to get an older boy to sell it for us, on the day of the theft, before it was discovered and an alarm was sent out to the pawnshops to watch for the stolen goods. The older boy got his usual 20 per cent of the take for selling for us.

It was always better, when

you were going to spend a night breaking into cars, to have a car with you to carry away the bulky loot. So you had to steal one. This was not too difficult to manage. In those days you could start the motor of a Ford merely by placing a quarter on the two nuts beneath the ignition. You had to be careful about the kind of car you stole; it could not be too flashy or too old. A black Plymouth sedan two or three years old was the ideal anonymous car. Then you drove to a rich residential part of town to begin your work. Only an idiot wasted his time robbing the poor.

The rich were always easy prey. They seldom bothered to lock their cars at night, either on the street or in their garage, and they were most obligingly careless about the articles they left in their car. But of course petty theft is not one of the elements of their fine lives, and they refuse even to give it status by taking precautions against it.

One of the boys drove the "service" car half a block ahead of the boy who was stealing from the parked cars, so that there would be no particular connection between them if someone came along. After taking everything from a block of cars, the one boy carried the loot to the waiting automobile

and they drove off to another block. Here they changed places, the driver now going out to do the stealing.

Generally, only in the less well-off sections were you forced to break into a car because the doors and windows were locked. As you go down the economic scale, the recognition of criminality increases. The simplest and quickest way of getting into a car was to pry open the ventilating window in front with a screw driver. This became tedious work after a few cars, and because it was so tedious you broke into cars only when the unlocked ones did not yield enough stuff. Destruction of anything, even an automobile window, was distasteful to the more fastidious craftsmen among us, and we avoided it wherever possible. Wanton destruction was for children and the deprived.

When the "service" car was full and we were tired from our night's labor, we drove to our hideout to dump our prizes of fur lap robes, topcoats, tool kits, cameras, pistols, and then we returned the car to where we had found it. It had served our purpose and we did not want to start any trouble by abandoning it somewhere and thereby stirring up the police. Nor did we joyride in the "service" car

while we had it out.

Joyriding is an entirely different kind of activity, enjoyed by special kinds of boys with special kinds of fast, expensive cars, under wholly different emotional auras, and it is not to be confused with car looting. The boy who steals cars for joyriding is absolutely separate from any other type of thief. He is slightly mad, and he pursues the pleasures of his maimed sensuality with the incommunicado concentration of a schizophrenic patrolling the secret chambers of his inner labyrinth.

Nothing can stop him. He hunts all night for his special love, and when he finds it, a bright red Cadillac convertible, a long black Lincoln sedan, he begins to live. Eighty, ninety, a hundred miles an hour he drives it, outstripping everything else on the highways, even fear itself, and after this, in his post-climactic tranquillity, he leisurely drives it back to town and to the downtown section to be stared at as if the car were his.

Sometimes he keeps the car for a few days, driving it to another town and showing it off there and then jilting it; sometimes he returns it before daylight comes. It all depends on how excited he is at the time. Once in a while he will keep it just long enough to drive to

school the next day to dazzle the other boys and generously let them caress its smooth beauty. But this is an expensive pleasure, for the chances are quite good that he and the car will be picked up before the day is over. If he is not picked up, he is out on the streets a few nights later, tracking down still another exquisite number with an insatiable engine.

IT WAS inevitable that we would mistake enthusiasm for talent and bring into our ranks a boy who did not really belong there. It happened once that such an outsider, a boy from a secure, comfortable home, was with one of our boys when the police surprised them. The outsider was a fleet-footed rascal and he got away, but our boy was caught and given a few months in a reformatory. He did not reveal the name of the boy who was with him, despite a going-over by the police.

A little while after he was sentenced, several of us arranged to visit him one Sunday to cheer him up and take him small presents of things he could not get where he was. The boy who escaped was supposed to come with us. It was expected of him in particular to make the visit. We waited and waited, but he did not show, and we finally

left without him.

We did what we could to make our buddy feel better, telling jokes and talking loud and promising marvelous times together when he got out. But it did not work. He asked us just once where the other boy was. We told him he had not shown up. We were very ashamed of him. None of us mentioned the boy again during the rest of the visit.

On our way out, though, there was no doubt in anyone's mind where we were going next. We had our laws and penalties just like any other group of human beings, even though we were *enfants criminales*.

USUALLY THE outstanding and most admired of the lone operators in our band was the oldest and the biggest, but now and again there appeared one who was younger than some of us, and he was a *wunderkind*.

Such a boy was Victor. Victor was twelve. His father was a drunk and his mother supported the family by working in a department store. Victor was a magnificent thief. His specialty was opening locks. He had fashioned himself a skeleton key that would open any lock it could get its head into. No one knew how Victor had learned to make this key, and only on very

special occasions did he even let anyone see it.

Victor was irresistibly attracted to bicycles that were locked against theft by those long, formidable looking spoke locks. His key raped these locks with extravagant ease. He did not care for bicycles that were left unlocked.

Victor's richest fields of plunder were the basement rooms and garages and back yards where the messenger boys of a particular Western Union office parked their bicycles for the night when they went home. Victor had acquired a messenger's uniform from a friend, and camouflaged in this he could come and go without questioning. His magic key in his pocket, Victor would stroll among the messengers' unguarded bicycles, select a new Pierce racer or an English Rolls with gear shift that pleased his fancy, open its lock, and then simply wheel away into the night. In his uniform he looked like any other messenger going about his robot business.

Victor's stable of bicycles was staggering. He had fifteen, all varieties, from a pure lined ascetic aluminum racer with no brakes, to a rococo balloon-tire cruiser with front and back lights and electric horn and a fox tail hanging from each han-

dle bar. He kept his collection inside a huge concrete bridge that spanned a park. He had discovered a small secret door at its base, picked the lock, and set up his storehouse and second home in a corner of its fabulous seclusion. Besides the bicycles, he had cached here all his other plunder, all of the things he had stolen from automobiles and houses and stores.

He allowed me to come here with him a couple of times to share its wonders. He displayed to me each of his treasures, and with that deep communion you can establish only with a fellow conspirator, related to me how he had stolen each one, the dangers involved, the thrilling risks, the final triumphant escape. What nerve! What cunning!

Then he took me on a tour of the bridge. Daylight shafted through open apertures, and as we climbed higher and higher through the vast concrete emptiness, crossing through a beam of light to reach another beam of concrete, I had the feeling that I was in some fantastic underground world. The automobiles raced along the road over our heads.

Now we were at the top looking down. On all sides of our slim concrete beam was a drop of two hundred feet to the ground. Victor suddenly shouted into the bridge's womb, "I'm king! I'm king! I'm king!" and we both laughed, and then we listened in ecstasy as the bridge finally returned our laughter and the soft shouts of "I'm king, I'm king, I'm king."

(This is a chapter from a novel in progress)



to examine Jewish humor seriously, as art in the raw, as a unique distillation of the sorrows and insights of the race. The opportunity is provided by a recent compilation of Jewish wit called *Röyte Pomerantsen*¹ (*Red Oranges*), "transliterated" from Yiddish — that is to say, printed in Latin letters reproducing Yiddish phonetically. The device was employed, the publishers say, to preserve the "untranslatable" flavor for Americans who understand but do not

The Nature of Jewish Laughter

by Irving Howe

AT THE HEART of Yiddish literature, often in its most earnest works, one finds Jewish humor — the homely anecdote or joke. It is a remarkable fact that this people of tragic destiny insisted on making laughter a major strand of their folk expression. And their greatest writers — Sholom Aleichem, Peretz, Mendele — based their works on this laughter as a matter of course and without condescension. It bound folk and artist in a tight relationship such as can be found in no other modern culture.

It is not frivolous, therefore,

read Yiddish. The volume is a valid introduction to the tight little world of the Russian-Polish ghettos that persisted for centuries, reached their cultural peak in the last half of the nineteenth century and came to an end in Hitler's slaughterhouses.

The very first joke in this collection shows how revealing folk humor can be:

You tell a joke to a peasant and he laughs three times: when you tell it; when you explain it; and when he understands it.

A landowner laughs only

¹\$3.00. Schocken.

twice: when he hears the joke and when you explain it. For he can never understand it.

An army officer laughs only once: when you tell the joke. He never lets you explain it — and that he is unable to understand it goes without saying.

But when you start telling a joke to another Jew, he interrupts you: "Go on! That's an old one," and he shows you how much better he can tell it himself.

Now offhand this anecdote seems merely to express an unattractive sense of group superiority: the Jew is more clever than anyone else. But take a second look at it and you see that it contains something more subtle and complex. The anonymous narrator is really poking fun at the weaknesses of his own people: their intellectual impatience and over-confidence. Though usually subtle, this persistent self-criticism of Jewish humor sometimes verges on self-denunciation. This ambivalent unity of pride and criticism is classically expressed in the Jewish saying, "We have a God in heaven, thank God; but has he got a people on earth, God help him!"

The quoted anecdote is a concentrated expression of the relationships between the East European Jews and the social classes of Tsarist Russia. Nearest

to the Jews in social status is the peasant; with him they have closest dealings and live peacefully for stretches of time. So though you have to tell the peasant a joke three times before he understands it, he at least can understand. But the landowner, scorned by the landless Jews even though they often had to deal with him and seek his protection, can never understand. And the army officer is most despised of all: first because he is a professional soldier, a reprehensible occupation for the Jews, and second because he represents the Tsarist army which in not-too-distant times used to shanghai Jewish boys for 25 years of military servitude. So we see that the degree of comprehension the anecdote grants to the peasant, the landowner and the officer reflects the attitudes of the Jews to the social group each personifies.

Of course not all Jewish humor is so heavily laden with such specific social relevance. Some jokes mock human folly and vanity in general, as for example one which pits a Greek and a Jew against each other. They boast of their ancient cultures.

"Why," says the Greek, "the archaeologists were digging in the ruins of Athens and found wires — which shows that my

ancestors had telegraph!" To which the Jew snorts back in reply: "Huh, that's nothing. They were digging in the ruins of Palestine and didn't find any wires — which shows that my ancestors had wireless!"

Or to quote another happy anecdote which seems universal in its application and relevance:

Two Jews get into a furious argument and end up by agreeing to a duel. Next morning at six o'clock one of the Jews is waiting, pistol in hand. A half hour, an hour, an hour and a half go by. The other Jew is not to be seen. Finally a messenger comes up to the Jew with the pistol and hands him a note from his opponent: "Listen, Joe, if I happen to be late, don't wait for me; go ahead and shoot!"

THE majority of the East European Jews were descended from refugees who had fled from the anti-Semitic excesses of the Crusades. These wanderers of the middle ages brought with them a dialect which, though bred in German, was to borrow from many languages, give rise to numerous locutions of its own, and develop its own vocabulary, grammar, idiom and inflection. Between this tongue, Yiddish, and German there are only surface similarities. Where German is heavy and formal,

Yiddish is breezy and conversational.

The position of the Jews in the Tsarist empire was always precarious and marginal; they usually lived in tiny villages where their economic function was to conduct petty trade between the peasantry and the towns. These villages were steeped in poverty.

The East European Jews clung tenaciously to their ways: religious customs frozen by centuries of use; isolation from western civilization and indifference to its affairs; condescension towards worldly knowledge and insistence that only in the Holy Books could truly useful knowledge be found. The East European Jews were the last to be attracted by the hope of assimilation.

In this isolated sub-world Hebrew was the language of prayer and study; men felt themselves the spiritual contemporaries of ancient prophets. But in the home and the marketplace Yiddish was the prevalent tongue; it thereby acquired a rich idiom drawn from daily life, which became one of the major ingredients of Yiddish humor.

Disintegrative tendencies often nibble away at a culture before it has reached its peak. When East European Jewry achieved its literary golden age

in the nineteenth century, it was already under assault by alien influences: tempting dreams of wealth in America; contagious rationalistic doctrines from western capitals; works of science and literature to seduce youths weaned on the Holy Books; disturbing doctrines of socialism and atheism. For though the Jews were often the victim of Tsarism, their way of life was inextricably bound up with it; neither could survive in the turbulent air of western capitalism.

This, then, is the world we meet in *Röyte Pomerantsen* and in the stories of Sholom Aleichem. It is a world of tension: half in the past and half in the future; a world of awareness: the self-consciousness of a transitional period; and a world of clashing values and intellectual excitement. And always evident at its base is economic primitivism and squalor.

STRICTLY speaking, Jewish humor is not humorous. It does not make you laugh uproariously nor does it provoke a care-free guffaw. The usual ingredients of current American humor — stylized insult, slapstick, horseplay, cruel practical jokes — are seldom present in Jewish humor. Rather is it disturbing and upsetting, its phrases dipped

in tragedy. A typical anecdote of *Röyte Pomerantsen* provokes a smile which is cut short by the disturbing realization that you have been made to think.

For here was a people which clung to the myth of the Chosen People despite the most extreme adversity and persecution. Despite its pride it was much too realistic not to recognize how grandiose an anomaly was the contrast between its claim and its position. Hence the characteristic strategy of its humor was an irony which measured the distance between pretension and actuality, held it up for public inspection and then made of it the salt of self-ridicule.

Jewish humor is therefore full of acute social observations. The group which struggles along on the margin of history is always in a better position to examine it realistically than the group which floats in mid-stream. But since Jewish humor was conceived as a means of *internal* criticism, it took for granted the poverty and misery which were the people's daily lot. These conditions were obliquely twisted into the materials of humor, but they are still observable in it. For instance:

In the old days, you no doubt remember, they used to grab children off the streets and send them to the army. Just so long

as they weren't married, they were taken at any age. So Jews — being Jews — found a way out. We used to marry off the children at the ages of six and seven. You'd walk along the street and see a husband, barefoot and in shorts, playing marbles. Once a Jew, seeing such a child, asked him why he wasn't at school. The child answered, "I don't go to school anymore, I was married yesterday." So the Jew asked him again, "If you got married yesterday and are now the head of a family, why aren't you wearing long pants?" The child replied, "Yesterday I got married, so I wore the pants; today my younger brother is getting married, so he's wearing the pants."

This is not exactly a light-hearted joke; yet one cannot but feel a certain admiration for a people which can laugh at these tragic facts of its own life. We find the same unrelenting realism in another anecdote which centers around a fabulous character, Hershl Ostropoler, who does all sorts of hare-brained things and then offers justifications which make one wonder if his oddities are not more relevant to life than our common sense.

Hershl is working as an assistant to a rabbi when a distraught woman comes for advice. In the rabbi's absence, he

hears her out. She complains that her daughter has been in labor for three days and still can't give birth. Never at a loss, Hershl tells her to place a copper penny on her daughter's naval in order to hasten the birth. A few days later the woman comes back and this time the real rabbi is present. She throws herself at the rabbi's knees and thanks him for the wonderful advice. The copper penny on the navel did the trick: the baby came out immediately. Guessing that this was another of Hershl's tricks, the rabbi turns to him and sternly asks, "Are you crazy unto death? Why a copper penny on the navel?" To which Hershl replies, "Listen, rabbi, I figured that if the little pauper saw the penny he'd jump right out to grab it."

Beneath Hershl's wisecrack there is an intimate sense of history, of helplessness before its inexorable sequences and yet of ultimate scorn for its workings. A classical expression of this attitude is found in another anecdote, one of the many "Rothschild jokes" which counterpose the fabulously wealthy Rothschild to clever beggars.

Two Jewish beggars once went to Rothschild's house for alms. Said the first to the second: "You know what? You go inside and I'll wait here."

The second beggar went in and told one of Rothschild's secretaries that he had come for alms. The poor beggar was passed along from secretary to secretary; slips of paper were filled out about his request; and finally after an hour of being shunted from office to office, the bewildered beggar reached the chief secretary. But when he got to the chief secretary's office, the beggar was brusquely told to beat it: no alms today.

As the beggar stepped out of Rothschild's house, he was asked by his companion, "Well, what did you get?"

"Get?" replied the beggar, "I got nothing, of course. But I must say that never in my whole life have I seen such a system as they have at Rothschild's!"

Implicit in this joke is a sly scorn for wealth and its bureaucratic apparatus together with a recognition of the need to concern oneself with them. A similar attitude is expressed in another Rothschild joke:

A Jew once came to Paris where a friend took him to the Jewish cemetery. There he saw Rothschild's grave over which loomed a large and beautiful tombstone. So the Jew looks at it and looks and looks — and then he turns to his friend and says, "You see, Yankl, you see that tombstone Rothschild has; that's what I call living!"

Here the knife is being twisted several ways. Obviously the Jew who makes the ironic remark is aware that, come what may, it is better to be poor and alive than rich and dead. Yet he also notices that the dead Rothschild is in a position to "live" better in his grave than we poor people who are really alive.

The same acute social perception can be found in the humor the East European Jews developed about those threats of external aggression from which their life was never free. That the Jews should be skeptical about wars and inclined to pacifism is understandable. One is reminded of the joke about the Albanian in the first world war who, when asked his opinion about the war, replied, "Two dogs are fighting over a bone and you ask the bone how it feels!" As the bone in the squabbles between dogs, the Jews ridiculed the idea of war *per se* and gently noted their lack of passion for things military. What is perhaps the most famous of all war jokes is of Jewish origin.

A Jewish soldier in the Russo-Japanese war shoots up in the air instead of at the enemy. He is brought before a Russian court martial and asked why he fired upwards. In apparent innocence he replies, "What do

you mean? In front of me there were people; if I'd shot at them I might have killed someone!"

Through the wit and satire of these folk anecdotes we also see an even greater danger to the life of the East European Jews: the pogrom. One of the most poignant and magnificent anecdotes of *Röyte Pomerantsen* is a subtle comment on this danger.

In a Jewish village there once appeared a circus with many animals. One evening a bear escaped. How and why, don't ask; he escaped and that's all there is to it. So the chief of police ordered that whoever saw the bear should kill him. When one Jew heard of this he decided to leave town immediately. "Why are you running away?" asked a friend, "You're not a bear." The Jew replied, "Listen to me. Before you know what has happened they'll kill a Jew — and then go prove he's not a bear!"

Though a joke usually involves a thrust at someone else, Jewish humor is often a thrust at the Jews themselves. The plight that is ridiculed is often that of the narrator, with whom the audience can so easily identify itself. But the Jewish joke is not merely self-criticism; it is at the same time self-justification. Or more accurately, it is in a state of constant tension between criticism and justification. For

the narrator is a sly fellow. If you extend his remark just a bit, it becomes a sardonic comment, not merely on the plight of the Jews, but also on the plight of all humanity:

In the midst of a ship's voyage, a severe storm broke out which endangered the lives of all aboard. The ship swayed from side to side; women fainted all over the place; people bewailed their fate. One Jew aboard the ship kept shrieking: "Help, Oh Lord! The ship is sinking, the ship is being smashed; help, help, the ship!"

Annoyed with the shrieking, another passenger went over and calmly asked him, "Why are you making such an uproar? What are you screaming about? Is it *your* ship?"

IF WE understand the word in its original Latin sense, Jewish humor is genuinely *vulgar*. It is not earthy, for the Jews lacked roots in the land and paid scant attention to nature. It is seldom obscene, for Jewish humor is too fascinated with the ridiculousness of man's total condition to be interested in his quickly decaying physical parts. But it is vulgar, common, ordinary, full of the affairs of common life; its scenes are kitchens, market-places, railroad stations and streets; its characters, housewives, mothers-in-law, chil-

dren, merchants and beggars. In Jewish humor we move along the social ladder from top to bottom, and often savor those delicious contrasts of manners between social strata which the Jews so enjoyed noticing.

A basic situation in Jewish humor is the counterposition of Rothschild, the archetypical millionaire, against the *schnorrer*, a sort of high-class beggar. Though the *schnorrer* is poor, he is also proud and will brook no humiliation. In one anecdote the *schnorrer* insists on seeing Rothschild personally and when he finally gains an interview he asks for alms.

"Couldn't you see my secretary if that's all you want?" asks Rothschild in anger. "See here, Mr. Rothschild," replies the *schnorrer*, "you may be very competent in your field, but don't tell me how to run *my* business."

If *schnorrers* have wit — what else can they live on? — then the *shadchen*, or matchmaker, is something of a philosopher. Faced with the task of pairing off doubtful human material, he becomes a bit skeptical about human nature. When he extolls the virtues of a bride-to-be, he quietly remarks, "Well, so what if she is a little pregnant?" Such things happen in this world and no one knows it better than the

shadchen. But sometimes even he forgets himself. One joke tells of a *shadchen* who tries to convince a bachelor to marry. But what are the advantages of marriage? asks the bachelor.

"Ah," answers the *shadchen*, "your wife cooks for you, she takes care of you, she mends your clothes, she blesses you with children, and she talks to you . . . and she talks to you . . . and she talks . . . the devil take her the way she talks!"

But the most perennial and beloved character of Jewish humor is the *schlemiehl*. How can one define a *schlemiehl*? That he is completely poverty-stricken goes without saying; that is the least of it. Let us rather say that he has a positive gift for getting into trouble, for doing things the wrong way, for saying the inept word at the inappropriate moment — and always with the best of intentions. He is the eternal innocent, and yet one is never sure if he is merely a good-natured fool or if there is a reservoir of deep and hidden wisdom beneath his foolishness.

A typical *schlemiehl* joke tells of the not-too-bright young man who before going to meet his bride-to-be is instructed by his father to talk about love and family affairs and then to wind up with a bit of philosophy.

That should be safe enough. The young man dutifully begins his conversation with his betrothed by asking her —

“Tell me, my love, do you love noodles?”

“Why of course I love noodles.”

“Tell me, darling, do you have a brother?”

“No. I have no brother.”

Well, at this point the young man has exhausted two of his three subjects and that leaves only philosophy.

So he asks her, “But suppose you did have a brother, would he love noodles?”

The special bitter-sweet taste of this humor, one is conscious, is largely dissipated in translation; language and content are too intimately wedded. It is the same flavor that marks off the major figures of Yiddish literature from any other European literary group, and binds them to the masses for whom they wrote. When Sholom Aleichem died in New York, when Peretz died in Warsaw, crowds of 150,000 attended their funerals. They were mourned even as

members of one's own family.

Though there was a Yiddish cultural movement of some proportions in America during the early part of the century, it has recently been restricted to an increasingly narrow circle. What has percolated into American life is a sad substitute — the dialect joke, often vicious and always cheap; the Jewish theatre with its tawdry farces and bathetic melodramas; the Broadway clowns who can only vulgarize Jewish humor; and the supercilious dialect writers for “sophisticated” magazines who exploit Jewish humor but fancy it proper to hold their noses while doing so. These vulgarizations have less genuine connection with Jewish humor than did, say, Will Rogers, with the American folk humor of Mark Twain. But in the pages of *Röyte Pomerantsen* and the stories of Sholom Aleichem, one may see the true and splendid expression of both a folk and its greatest artist in humor which mocks pomp and wealth, which shatters pretension and which upholds the poor and the suffering.

Irving Howe is a prolific writer of literary criticism, and at the moment is working on a study of Sherwood Anderson. He also is a student of politics and labor, being the co-author of a recently published book on Walter Reuther.



The Young Man Named Fry

BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

CHRISTOPHER FRY, the forty-three-year-old Englishman, has come into a theatre mortally ill of prosy speech and writing, injected into it a bolus of poetic imagination, and made it sit up again, look around, and gaily pinch its erstwhile despairing nurse on the bottom. Introduced to the American stage last year with one of his inferior efforts — a short play called *A Phoenix Too Frequent* — those critics who are unable to distinguish between a wretched production and a script were of the resolved opinion that he amounted to little or nothing, and that their British colleagues who had seen more of his work and had acclaimed him as the freshest and most ringing voice that had sung in the dusty recesses of the theatre in some years must be out of

their minds. But with the delayed presentation of his *The Lady's Not For Burning*, the light has hit most of them over the head like a baseball bat and they seem now, with qualifications, to be willing to concede that their English brethren were not quite so delirious as they had believed them to be. For this *The Lady's Not For Burning* brings again to a dry stage a flood of beauty, and of some wit and wisdom too, that long parched audiences may revel in, and its production with a first-rate company headed by John Gielgud and Pamela Brown, admirably directed by Gielgud and appropriately designed and costumed by Oliver Messel, this time fortunately does not stand in the way of a proper appraisal of the play itself.

I have mentioned qualifications in many of the critics' estimates of Fry. One of these is that his play is "precious." If precious is meant as affected or extremely special or designed for the few, as it doubtless is, the derogation is injudicious. While it is deliberately artificial in the sense that, say, Sheridan and Wilde in another manner are, it is scarcely affected, unless it be that the expression of an honest wit, of an inherent gift for melodious line and of a naturally amusing mind is an affectation. And that the play is extremely special and designed mainly for the few — even allowing that its author may reluctantly have believed it so — is similarly questionable, since it ran to large business for nine whole months in London and since it looks at this writing to be a box-office success in New York. The play is, of course, "precious" in the sense that either the popularly successful or quickly doomed truck of Broadway isn't, but I think everyone will agree that that isn't anything markedly against it.

Another qualification is that Fry's play "lacks warmth of emotion." It is true that it lacks warmth of emotion if warming emotion means the sentimental hot-water bottles and the hokum syrups of so much of con-

temporary playwriting, but there is plenty of it for the theatre-goer whose reactions are reserved rather for splendor of language, for the intoxication provided by it, and for the wayward little philosophies that find an echo in the thinking heart.

Still another objection, it seems, is that it is "lacking in human feeling." Any such criticism would have us believe that the bulk of Strindberg is similarly to be dismissed, and worthless. And another still is that the play's plot is of secondary importance to the manner of its expression, and that the plot is furthermore silly, a complaint that might as aptly be applied to *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *The Tempest*.

I am not setting myself up as Fry's defense counsel. He has his faults and, if his critics only could think up better arguments regarding them, even some of those they have brought into court might possibly hold water. But, one way or another, I don't see that they too much matter, unless one chooses to be the Banquo at a feast all too uncommon in our present day theatre. A feast, that is, of flavored English tongue, spiced humor, peppery wit, satirical salads, and the sweets of singing, beautiful speech.

IF THERE is a real shortcoming in Fry it is his lack of critical restraint and overflow of poetical sound for its own sake. Somewhat unnecessarily condescending, T. S. Eliot, whose play, *The Cocktail Party*, well could stand a little of Fry's eloquence, has nevertheless hit the nail at least sidewise on the head when he remarks, "If the young man wants to be a poet, he first must learn to be less poetical." There is a superabundance to Fry's verse that, like too much food, however well-prepared and appetizing, has a tendency to gag the palate. And there is another shortcoming still, and that is his evident fear of too mellifluous utterance and his efforts practically to minimize it by tacking onto its ends waggish colloquialisms or self-critical apologies.

But, again, what over-all does it matter? With the exception of the matchless O'Casey, there is at the moment no one among living, English-speaking dramatists who equals Fry's ability to weave words together with more music, to weave into them at the same time so wryly amusing a look at life, and to make the whole warble like nightingales in a theatre of sparrows.

"By God, a cuckoo! Grief and God," proclaims one of his characters,

"A canting cuckoo, that laugh
with no smile!

A world unable to die sits on
and on

In spring sunlight, hatching
egg after egg,

Hoping against hope that
out of one of them

Will come the reason for it
all; and always

Out pops the arid chuckle
and centuries

Of cuckoo-spit."

And so, too, the theatre sits on and on, hatching egg after egg, out of which pop only arid chuckles and dramatic cuckoo-spit. But out of one egg, at least, Fry has popped something more, something that lifts up its head and crows triumphantly above the dung-heap. If we perhaps overestimate him, good! Let us overestimate him, as with some reason we would a crust of any kind of bread in a rat-infested and barren bakery.

Though *The Lady's Not For Burning* admittedly represents Fry at his best, though in the earlier-mentioned *A Phoenix Too Frequent* some of his defects are emphasized, and while in *Venus Observed*, which has not yet been produced here, he misses his aim, his gift of graceful pen is nevertheless again to be perceived in his translation of Jean Anouilh's *L'Invitation au Château*, produced locally and in

London as *Ring Round The Moon*. Reworking the pleasant fantasy about twin brothers and the confusion they inspire in several feminine bosoms, he brings to it a sauce of expression it did not always have in the original, and, too, something of an elliptical, humorous melody.

Fry, in general, belongs to what is often derogated as the "literary" theatre, as opposed to the theatre of blossomless and unadorned dialogue and action. The theatre, it is overlooked or forgotten in such criticism, is at its best only when it is literary, or what the detractors mean the word to imply. It isn't necessarily the theatre of poets alone; it is as well the theatre of writers of prose who lend to their expression the symmetry and song of an artist's sculptured language.

Nor is the so-called literary theatre the isolated and snobbish theatre of the detractors' imagination. Shaw, whose plays are literature, has proved to be a greater box-office attraction for a longer span of time than many a contemporary whose plays are illiterature. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, whatever one may think of it critically, surely comes under the literary heading, yet it has proved to be as much a part of the popular theatre as some such unliterary play as *The*

Happy Time. O'Neill is literature, and his plays have made a fortune at the popular box-office. Giraudoux's *The Madwoman Of Chaillot* is "literary" and yet was a popular success. Any question of critical quality aside, such labeled "literary" plays as Anderson's *Winterset* and *Anne Of The Thousand Days* have played to a good trade, and Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Glass Menagerie* to an even very considerably better.

TO RETURN to Fry, there are times when he allows himself to get out of hand and to become a little too "literary." At such moments he can be very uncomfortable. "Humphrey went twinkling like Lucifer into the daffodils," for example, is likely to make the auditor pause and blow his nose. In another direction, "You bubble-mouthing, fog-blathering, chin-chuntering, chap-flapping, liturgical, turgidical, base old man" has the sound of a bright college boy dressed up for a masquerade in Shakespearean costume. "The morose dynamics of our dumb friend Jehovah" calls for some liniment in its strain; and so does "the convolutions of convolulus"; and so, surely, does "The whole thing's a lot of amphigourious stultiloquential fiddle-faddle." And we could

also do without coy things like "O tedium, tedium, tedium. The frenzied ceremonial drumming of the humdrum! Where in this small-talking world can I find a longitude with no platitude," and such over-studied lines as "We're softened by a nice conglomeration of the earth's uneven surface, refraction of light, obstruction of light, condensation, distance, and that sappy upshot of self-centred vegetableness, the trees of the garden."

But there is ample atonement in the rest. In the lovely music of dozens of lines like "I've been cast adrift on a raft of melancholy. The night-wind passed me, like a sail across a blind man's eye. There it is, the interminable tumbling of the great grey main of moonlight, washing over the little oyster-shell of this month of April." In the imagery of "Or Alexander, wearing his imperial cobwebs and breastplate of shining worms, wakens and looks for his glasses, to find the empire which he

knows he put beside his bed." In a reference to a bleeding wound, "Isn't it beautiful? A splash from the cherry-red river that drives my mill." In such metaphor as "The sky's pale belly glowing and growing big, soon to deliver the moon." And in a lot, a whole fancy-warming lot, more.

For what, all in all, is poetry? It is the gift for making, with a touch of beauty, the agreeable more agreeable and the disagreeable less so. It is the gift for making sentiment acceptable to cynics and cynicism acceptable to the sentimental. It is, in short, as Carl Sandburg put it so happily almost a quarter-century ago in his *Good Morning, America*, "where a million years ago you moved out of the sea on the land for a change, and now you want to leave the land and fly in the air for a change." Or, better still, "where you write till you are ashamed of yourself and then cut it down to next to nothing."



The Death of the Hero

BY WILLIAM POSTER

FOR QUITE A long while it was a national conversational pastime to attack movies for being "escapist." Superhuman heroes and heroines were shown whom the audience could identify with, temporarily forgetting about the dreary problems of their own humdrum lives. Of course, when they floated out of the air-cooled movie palaces, they were right back behind the old eight-ball, and according to the pundits, considerably the worse off for their sojourn in wonderland.

I have never felt too certain about the evil consequences of "escapism" myself. Some twenty-five hundred years of speculation on the *raison d'être* of various kinds of fiction have brought forth a heap of theories which prove chiefly that human needs change and the arts along with them. Even whiskey and drugs have beneficial effects or they would not remain in use.

While it was busy opening the escape valves, Hollywood was also manufacturing models for people to admire and ape. If they could only break into the charmed circles the screen exhibited, the audience felt they would walk right into a penthouse paradise, lead platinum-plated lives in which thrills and adventures were so plentiful there would be no time to be sick or old or depressed. In doing so, Hollywood scarcely diverged from the nation as a whole, for it was still incubating in its youthful heroic cocoon. The general idea in this country has been that if you were smart, daring or lucky enough, you could end up living in a simply fabulous style, like the prince of a streamlined fairy tale. And the great figures of the period, the giants of business, sport or entertainment did seem like miraculous creatures, different in kind rather than degree from

the rest of the population. Even the big-time gangsters, the Capones and Dillingers, seemed to explode out of Homeric epics rather than the fear-ridden, conniving lairs of criminality.

Essentially all the screen has done for the last two decades is to transmute into cinematic imagery the American vision of the glamorous life, free from dirt, dullness, taxes, worry, and disease. The vision offered wonderful scope to the grinding cameras; it enlisted actors of immense nervous energy and visual inventiveness. The best society comedies and gangster films of the Thirties and Forties were remarkable spectacles, continuous ballets of fluent, tricky movement.

Actors like Cary Grant or James Cagney were absolute incarnations of an age. Grant integrated a dozen different attributes: loose-limbed height, pigeon toes, trick knees, a nasal drawl and a hat like a visual wisecrack, to project complete mastery of the upper-class, sophisticated world. At the opposite extreme, small and compact, with a whispering boyish voice, standing flatfooted as if he were always on the verge of slugging somebody behind the ear, Cagney was the regal lion-cub of the street-corner jungle.

In success or defeat both had

their tight, glittering worlds completely under control. They could be challenged, outnumbered, even killed, but nothing could break into their impenetrable elegance and perpetual agility. If death struck down the heroes, it was a quick, painless, non-physical event. One minute they were sitting about exchanging wisecracks, the next a tire blew out, a fusillade of bullets poured out of a cab, and they were ghosts as in *Topper* or the tape-wrapped special delivery corpse in the breath-taking finale of *Public Enemy*.

All of which helped to dodge the great American questions that were in the back of everybody's mind. What does the champ do when his reflexes slow down? Doesn't the playboy get tired of playing? After success, what? How does a pin-up girl talk at a breakfast table? What do you do for thrills at sixty? Behind the immaculate screen, the spectres of ignored realities were beginning slowly to edge their way to the front.

WHAT HAS been happening? Well, it is my own carefully formed, if possibly unoriginal, opinion that in the last three or four years the people of this country have been going through the most drastic change of mind in their history. We

have been making some astoundingly simple but immensely shocking discoveries. Or, at least, my generation (approximately the one described in these pages by Robert Lowry) has.

The first such discovery was like that made by the raw recruit when he charged out of the trenches, then dashed back, shouting, "Holy smoke, you can get killed out there."

The second discovery was made by the man at the race-track for the first time after he had won two races and lost the third. "Let me out of here," he screeched angrily, "You can lose money in this joint." To translate this into more common terms, it means that whatever you want, you may not get it. You can invest your time, energy, money or your life towards reaching some goal you were instinctively sure you would arrive at and never get there. By the time they learned this one, a lot of people were too busted up from overwork to change or compromise.

The third discovery was the crusher and it can be summed up by the phrase "you can't win" or, as one of my friends frequently mutters, "everyday is D-day." It went like this. You have a crucial problem; you know what to do and you are

equipped to do it. You go to work, you strain every muscle and nerve, you bring up all your weapons and invent a few new ones. You organize everything superbly and let go, Boom! Whoosh! Boing! It worked! You put it over. Great! Let's celebrate. You buy a few drinks, catch up on some sleep and come back next morning to check up on the results. What's that? Russia next? You're kidding! The government takes what percentage? I've only got the job till Jones gets back? According to specifications, the whole thing has to be done over? What? Who? Where? Mister, weeeee qqqqqquit! Only you can't quit; instead, you start all over again with a brand-new perspective.

In the new perspective, most of the heroic attributes and beliefs are missing. Nobody leads a charmed life and nobody is instinctively sure of success. Essentially, the old hero lived for the one big day in his life, the dramatic climax when he met the opposing army and ended up in Valhalla or with the princess and half the kingdom, tax-free. In an atomic civilization, there are no such climaxes, or rather they occur every morning. The same awesome decisions have to be made afresh. The hero can never rest on his laurels. Which,

in selected nutshells, is why the whole glamor world seems to be fading out of the newer films. There are actually two distinct kinds of motion pictures now being made. The first is a hang-over from the first half of the twentieth century. The second type is a wobbly introduction, a sort of transition to the movies we may be looking at for a couple of decades, if we are still here.

Pictures of the second type often have much in common. For example, three of them look as if a similar idea and way of presenting it occurred simultaneously to different movie-makers. *Breakthrough* shows a careworn captain training a young lieutenant. Before long, the captain has cracked up and the lieutenant, aging rapidly, has taken his place. The picture closes upon him instructing a new young lieutenant, in such a way that your imagination opens up a long vista of lieutenants succeeding captains — like the men on Oysterette crackerboxes eating out of crackerboxes with other men, *ad infinitum*.

In *All About Eve*, the aging actress assists a young prodigy who insidiously displaces her. The picture closes with the new star considerably the worse for wear and tear being hounded by

a fresh version of herself. In *A Life of Her Own*, Lana Turner plays a model on her way up the ladder of success. She soon meets one stumbling down, Ann Dvorak, aging, and suffering from too many cocktails and too many men. Dvorak commits suicide; the rest of the picture shows Miss Turner heading in the same direction.

All three pictures hammer away at the same point: successful people are merely replaceable units in an endless, repetitive social process. They are lonely, misunderstood, age quickly and are hopelessly trapped in an environment beyond their control. A brilliant achievement is likely to kill you, and this is the death blow to the heroic myth.

A NUMBER OF impressive pictures have been made of lower and middle class urban life that likewise reverse and deglamorize previous trends. Location-shooting, a different kind of photography, more naturalistic make-up and dialogue combine to sink the main characters in the crowds. By tom-tom-like repetition of scenes and situations, by bringing the camera so close that the actors fairly bulge out from the screen, these pictures communicate the trapped, obsessive life of modern cities and the dogged, obstinate will-

to-survive responding to crushing pressures.

In the newer films, Hollywood seems to be in the throes of creating new types of male and female leads. These new personalities seem to be reacting to an overpowering environment and their own deep urges so directly that they have nearly no style and no superfluous or distinguishing mannerisms. Women like Lana Turner in *A Life of Her Own*, Ann Sheridan in *Woman on the Run* or Patricia Neal in *Three Secrets* seem to be continually reminding you that sex is only part of their equipment and you had better pay attention to the rest. The men (David Brian in *Breakthrough*, Farley Granger in *Edge of Doom*, or Sterling Hayden in *The Asphalt Jungle*, are good examples) look as if their entire personality was built to handle a single, bulky passion which generates all their actions.

Both males and females seem to have a capacity for enduring unpleasant moods that is positively awe-inspiring. They look perfectly prepared to go through the next fifty years without cracking a smile, if that's the way conditions strike them. They would endure whatever predicament life dealt them with stoical fortitude but would scarcely lash out furiously or imaginatively to escape. In short,

they are the absolute opposite of the heroes and heroines of the earlier movies and seem likely to evolve even further away.

And now I should like to return to my opening remarks. I implied that the old-style, escapist movie probably had some virtues or it would not have survived. I think that they can be explained by the fact that the first half of the twentieth century was primarily a pioneering period. An incredible number of innovations and revolutions in business, technology, politics, the sciences and the arts were brought off by a host of miracle-workers and geniuses. The pictures portrayed miraculous people, thereby helping keep alive the belief in the possibility of marvels. The glamorous dream-world was the paradise people had to think of as the reward for all the nerve-wracking work that went into creating our complex, high-powered civilization.

The second half of the twentieth century does not have the same kind of role. The basic discoveries in most fields have been made and merely have to be applied and consolidated. The same kind of aphrodisiac, timeless dream-world is no longer necessary. Instead of ingenious, audacious heroes we will probably need people who can manage simply to stay alive.

Noble Hawks and Neurotic Women

Books

BY CHANDLER BROSSARD

IT HAS BEEN my considerable pleasure to have spent this month's reading tour in the hands of two very capable, talented guides. I'm talking about Walter Van Tilburg Clark and Mary McCarthy, each of whom has just had published a volume of short stories, *The Watchful Gods*, by the former,

and *Cast A Cold Eye*. Their terrains are in many ways antithetical, geographically and otherwise, but taken together they complement each other admirably. Mr. Clark led me through canyons and sage brush and western outposts and the rural sensibility, while Miss McCarthy paced me through the streets and ravines and sensibility of the city.

This was my first meeting with the regional-minded Mr. Clark, though I had heard of him, mostly through the movie made of his novel *The Oxbow Incident*. Because I've been bred a city man, I've always been in some ignorance about what goes on, so to speak, in the country. What in hell are all those people doing way out there? I've often shouted in the night. Mr. Clark has now cleared all this up for me. In fact, I sincerely believe that he has touched off some slumbering vestigial feelings in me, expanded my vision.

The stories in his fine, unusual collection range from the life and death struggles of a hawk, to a prospector's revenge on a cougar, to the memory of an "old timer," to an idiot boy's love for a sluggish purple fish. Mr. Clark's immersion in the objects and feelings of the "natural" landscape quite amazed

me. I didn't think anybody intellectually inclined could be so close to such things. His careful, rhapsodic delineations of these objects and feelings made me think immediately of some "primitive" painters, Rousseau for instance, who paint each leaf, each branch, each animal with such care and love that these things are charged into a passionate, animate meaning all their own.

With most writers, plot consists in the sequential treatment of external events. In Mr. Clark's work, however, while quite a bit does happen externally, the real plot, or action, is in the sensibility, the levels of feeling, in the man or animal in the story; and even sometimes in the variations of the landscape itself.

For example, take these paragraphs from the story "The Wind and the Snow of Winter":

If not tonight, then tomorrow, or the next day, the snow would begin which shut off the mountains, so that a man might as well be on a great plain for all he could see, perhaps even the snow which blinded a man at once and blanketed the desert in an hour. Three nights before Mike Braneen had been awakened by a change in the wind. It was no longer a wind born in the near mountains, cold with night and altitude,

but a wind from far places, full of a damp chill which got through his blankets and into his bones.

The stars had still been clear and close above the dark humps of the mountains, and overhead the constellations had moved slowly in full panoply, unbroken by any invisible lower darkness, yet he had lain there half awake for a few minutes, hearing the new wind beat the brush around him, heating Annie stirring restlessly and thumping in her hobble. He had thought drowsily, "Smells like winter this time," and then, "It's held off a long time this year. . . ." Then he had gone back to sleep, mildly happy because the change meant he would be going back to Gold Rock.

Whatever else happens in the story, whatever the miner winds up *doing*, the real motion and structure of the story have been in his feelings and reflections and the shiftings of the atmosphere and terrain. This is the depth of the story, the lasting part, even if it lasts but in a semi-conscious way in the reader.

One of the stories in this volume, "The Rapids," is, in a strange way, the most accomplished combination of humor and intensity that I have encountered in quite a spell. A man goes down to a river to

take his bath and in so doing he discovers a sunken rowboat. He forgets about everything else in his life as he raises the boat, and then proceeds to paddle and pole it here and there, and finally teases himself near some rapids. That's about it. But the man does this with such concentration and solitary enjoyment that you come away feeling you have just witnessed the first trip taken in the first rowboat. And for some damn fool reason you find yourself grinning. It's eerie.

Mr. Clark's imagination and craftsmanship reach their combined peak in the story "Hook." This is the one about the hawk, and it is this one in particular that plays on your vestigial memories. I cannot synopsise it without doing it a grave injustice; however, on the surface it goes something like this: a hawk is born, gradually becomes deadly and magnificent as a bird of prey, is crippled by a bullet, then, half helpless, suffers one humiliation after another in the animal world, and is finally slain in a savage battle with the dog of the Jap farmer who had originally crippled him.

It is the finest story of its kind that I've ever read (it far overshadows anything Steinbeck ever dreamed of). So deeply

felt is Mr. Clark's conception, so sure his technique for realizing it, that almost from the word go the reader identifies with the hawk — his soaring, primitive power and loneliness and independence — and it is quite an experience, believe me. When the crippled, half blind but still valiant hawk is chewed to death by the dog, while the farmer greedily sucks it on, you feel that something quite terrible has just taken place, and you want to turn your head from it.

"Oh, the brave bird," the farmer's wife says, partly in shame, partly in reverential awe, as she watches the bird die.

MISS MCCARTHY, in the volumes under discussion, has two things in common with Mr. Clark: a primary concern with sensibility rather than with narrative as such, and an unwavering devotion to a prose that will best render the subtleties of her particular terrain and the objects thereon. It is the anguished urban sensibility that Miss McCarthy's prose writhingly plots. The people in her stories all seem uncontrollably involved in endless showdowns with the people around them, or as often as not just with themselves; and nobody, unfortunately, ever seems to win. But

this is the deadly pattern of relationships among "thinking" people.

Miss McCarthy's attitude toward the people in her stories is one of contempt and outrage, but it is not just a shallow, miffed, critical attitude. It originates in a deep and almost continually disappointed moralism. She wants people with intelligence to be good and decent and productive, and that they are not arouses the furious broken-hearted chastiser in her. Once in a while, however, she gets carried away and becomes pedantic, but this is a minor fault.

The most ambitious story in this collection is an extremely long study of a desolate marriage, symbolically titled "The Weeds." A completely demoralized urban woman, living now in the country, is obsessed almost to the point of insanity with leaving her husband, and finally she does run away. But her demoralization has become so thorough, as a result of living with someone she loathes, that her break for freedom fizzles and she is led back to the dungeon by her husband who does everything but kick her in the stomach right in front of you. It is the classic example of how inertia and passivity keep many people together.

She could see her own case now with the detachment of a historian. Between them, he and she had killed off the part of her that had always excited his anxiety and irritation, the part of her which regarded nothing as final, which was continually planning, contriving, hoping, which lived in the future and slept, like a fireman, fully dressed for an emergency. It was this part of her which had dreamed of flight and deliverance, but it was also this part which had created for itself the small mirages of duty and pleasure which had held her to him for five years. These were not, as she had thought, antithetical selves, but the same thing, the creative, constructive principle which, in its restless anticipation of change, built structures of semi-permanency — a series of overnight cabins that in their extension formed, not precisely a city, but at least a road, a *via vitae*.

Everything in their marriage, in short, had finally succumbed to the weeds. The flowers in their garden, you feel, had been planted in absolute panic, just to hide the weeds that had always been there.

My favorite story in *Cast A Cold Eye* (an apt and beautiful title, I think, from Yeats' lines, "Cast a cold eye on life, on death. Horseman, pass by") is

"The Cicerone" (Italian for guide). An intellectual American couple traveling in Italy are picked up by a smooth upper-class Italian gentleman and are gradually misguided and haunted by him throughout their dismal stay in that gentle, deluding country. It is a most admirable treatment of the American's naive need to become entangled with and conned by a senile, suave Europe which he still, somehow, admires and feels slightly inferior to. I heartily recommend it to anyone in the neighborhood who

has come away from a European sojourn somewhat dazed.

It is through the almost fanatically dedicated efforts of such people as Miss McCarthy and Mr. Clark that the short story in this country has not entirely degenerated into a second rate, cliché form of anecdote. It's a dirty shame, of course, that they are not more widely read, Clark in particular. I discovered that only one story in his entire collection was published in what could be called a national magazine. This is blasphemy, no less.

NOTE.

Because of spatial limitations, THE MERCURY is unable to include in this issue a selection from "The Revolt of Mamie Stover."

What Hath Two Billion Dollars Wrought?



BY JOHN TEBBEL

A PITIFUL SCENE took place in Washington last November, a scene as portentous in its relatively small way as the anxious dramas occurring elsewhere in the capital while the dismal and fateful year ran out. The actors, a group of educators, had come before the Federal Communications Commission to rehearse an old script whose theme was conflict: commercialism against culture.

The educators thought something ought to be done to make sure that at least a part of television's future available channels would be dedicated to the

spreading of culture and enlightenment. The Commission was inclined to stand with them on this high ground, but despite its support, the petitioners were obviously doubtful that education would get any better deal from television than it got from radio.

Thus history began to repeat itself, proving that the communications industry is getting old enough to have a past. Older students will remember how we went through this stage with radio, back in the lost Twenties, when the crystal set was hailed as the signpost to a new era in which we would all broaden our horizons at home. There was a brief subsequent period when it appeared that the promise might be fulfilled. Great orchestras were heard, fine plays enacted, and noted scholars spoke to millions of people. Industry executives, making speeches at their annual meetings, were fond of citing these achievements as proof of radio's lofty mission in the world.

But gradually the whole cultural armament of radio was reduced as more and more advertising dollars were poured into it and time became increasingly valuable. Today there is very little left of radio to which even a vice-president could point with pride. In a few years there

may be only news programs and phonograph records to point to at all.

Like seeing an old movie again — an easy comparison where television is concerned — we have already passed through the bright-promise stage. The new medium has been recognized as a means of bringing the classroom, the concert hall, and other cultural appurtenances right into the home. Granting that only a minority will absorb culture even if it is set painlessly before them, it has still been possible to think of television as an incomparable means of mass education.

The educators in Washington were sure of this, but they were the first to point out that universities, pinched as they are for dollars, would not be likely to ask for more than a sliver of the allocation pie. The cost of television is beyond the reach of nearly every college, except for a few in special circumstances.

Well, it was argued, the cost would have to come down some day, and wouldn't education like to have a few reserved seats while they were still available? It was no secret that even this pittance was opposed in some quarters. There are a limited number of seats in the ultra-high-frequency theatre, and each one of them has consider-

able potential value in dollars and cents.

The hearings ended with the Commission willing and the educators willing, and the distant clanging of cash registers in the wings sounding an indefinite but ominous end of the drama.

If there is a moral, it is the obvious one — that television is a terribly expensive medium which only the rich can afford, and everybody knows who has the cash in the communications business. They are pretty boastful of it, too, these current entrepreneurs who are financing the show. It is presently spoken of as a two-billion-dollar industry, even at this comparatively early point in its development.

WHAT, EXACTLY, are we getting for our two billion dollars? Currently we are getting, among other things, an intramural fight over color transmission which promises to make the whole thing more expensive than ever. Aside from that, there is available about fifteen hours of daily programming emanating from seven channels, to take the New York City area as a point of maximum performance.

Those fifteen hours are subdivided, roughly, into three types of offerings. There is, first,

a solid foundation of film — old Hollywood productions, English pictures which failed to make the grade, and shorts dealing with subjects usually confined to filler material in early editions of newspapers. Not only are these films far below a standard which is none too high, but they are shown again and again, in all the glory of their battered, muddy sound tracks and ghostly visual transparency. There are more than a hundred film listings per week in the New York television programs.

In cities outside New York, films are hashed up into a repellent stew known in the trade as "the jungle." The jungle is an hour or more of five- and ten-minute film shots, interspersed with local commercials which pay for the time. It is acknowledged that the advertisers and stations are enabled to get away with such mayhem simply because there is only one station in town, and anybody who wants to look at television has to take what's offered to him. The films are bad enough — composed of chopped-up Grade Z features and emasculated short subjects — but the commercials are infinitely worse, and the viewer may get more than a dozen of them in a single hour.

Fortunately, New York viewers see most of their movies at

early and late hours, when time is less valuable. The expensive hours are taken up by what can only be termed visual radio, in 75 per cent of the cases. As in radio, drama leads the field. There are more than forty of them weekly, excluding the juveniles, offered on the seven New York channels. Most of these trickle out along the coaxial cable to other cities. Less than a half-dozen of the forty are adult entertainment. The others are animated comic books.

The subject of television drama deserves, and will get later, a full treatment in this department, including the dramatic commercial, which only a man with a strong stomach can contemplate soberly.

Films and drama take up most of television's time. The third large category is the variety show, which ranges from Jimmy Durante all the way down to Ed Sullivan, a span comparable to the difference between Ethel Barrymore and Jane Russell. Stir in sports, news shows and special events like the UN sessions, and you have the two billion dollars worth of television currently available.

Seems overpriced, doesn't it?

There is a slight smattering of culture. Mrs. Roosevelt entertains ably on Sunday afternoon, demonstrating how to tame

Republican Senators and keep people from each other's throats. A little later "Meet The Press" exhibits a cross-examination of a more or less newsworthy personage by reporters who sometimes sound curiously like their bosses. Variations on both these themes exist, but they are negligible.

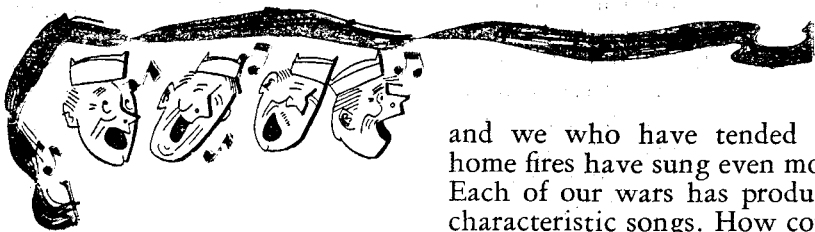
Symphony orchestras appear rarely on television. There was a brief flurry about three years ago when both major networks rushed to be the first to televise a major orchestra. Unfortunately, the cameras caught Eugene Ormandy in the act of absently scratching his nose while he conducted the Philadelphians with his off-hand, and that may have discouraged further experimentation. Not long after, the Boston Symphony was advertised in a special concert with Yehudi Menuhin as soloist, but some trouble with the union developed, and Mr. Menuhin appeared in front of the orchestra playing a bit of unaccompanied Bach.

That is about as far as first-

rate symphonic music has gone on television. Opera has done a little better, with two Metropolitan openings and a few condensed versions of established favorites, in English, to its credit. These have proved rather conclusively that the libretto writers of earlier centuries will never replace Oscar Hammerstein II, and that no woman can look beautiful, or even human, in a close-up while she is articulating an aria.

As for education, the Navy has been the only institution to use television for mass instruction. The public has been privileged to look in on some of its sessions, perhaps for recruiting purposes, and as far as a civilian can see, the idea appears to work out fine. The Navy can afford it, of course, because it is financed from the public treasury and not by harassed state legislatures or reluctant alumni.

Any of you taxpayers want a good technical education and a chance to get some of your money back? Join the Navy and see your professors on television. Anchors aweigh!



Why No Korean War Songs?

BY JOHN TASKER HOWARD

AS A SONG WRITER and a student of music I have a strange observation to report: for the first time in our history we Americans are fighting a war without a single song being written about it. For months our men have been dying in Korea — and dying for the noble purpose of trying to make men free — yet in all of Tin-Pan Alley neither I nor one of my colleagues has produced a song to comfort or inspire or commemorate.

Why is this so? Why haven't our radios rocked with *We'll Free-a Korea* or *On to Pyongyang* or *MacArthur Will Do It Again*? We are a singing nation. Our fighting men have always sung,

and we who have tended the home fires have sung even more. Each of our wars has produced characteristic songs. How could the tattered patriots have survived Valley Forge without *Yankee Doodle*? How could the pride of the South have endured for four years without *Dixie*? How could Grant have taken Richmond without *Glory Hallelujah*? But where are the songs for Korea?

We of Tin-Pan Alley are hardly allergic to the fast dollar. We are enterprisers; the newspapers are part of our daily bread; we often have a topical song on the radio within a week. Yet here, with all the news of great battles and great suffering, not one of us has come forward with a song.

The answer to why the songs have not been written is simple. No writer has felt impelled to write them because no one wants to sing them and no one wants to listen to them. But to find why this is so we must examine some of our song history. For songs are important; they are history books; they — or the lack of them — can reveal changes in the hearts of a people.

Our two great wars of the

twentieth century produced a variety of songs, and these songs are worth studying. They reveal the temper and attitudes of both the fighters and the people at home. The topical references tell about the battles, the personages involved, and the issues for which we fought.

At the beginning of the First War, in 1914-15, pacifism was strong in this country. There were songs like *I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier*, *The Shrine of Peace*, *I Don't Want to Go to War*, and *Don't Blame the Germans*. After we entered the war, these pacifist songs were opposed by recruiting songs like *I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Coward*, *Those Draftin' Blues*, *The Drafted Man*, *Have You Seen the Lad Called a Slacker?* and *A Girl of Mine Shall Never Marry a Slacker*.

In the Second War there were few drafting or recruiting songs. The principle of the draft was so widely accepted that such songs were neither necessary nor appropriate. Our only references to the draft were facetious: *You're 1-A in the Army and A-1 in My Heart*, or *They're Either Too Young or Too Old*.

Songs reveal the degree of participation of women in the two wars. In the First War women, actually and lyrically, were confined to nursing and the Red Cross, so the most famous song

was *The Rose of No Man's Land*. In the Second War, with women marching alongside, we had *Sweet Captain*, *One Little WAC*, *Something New Has Been Added to the Army*, *The WAC Is a Soldier, Too*, *The Song of the WAVES*, and *He's Got a WAVE in His Hair and a WAC on His Hands*.

The comparative costs of the two wars can be noted from the number of bond drive songs each produced. There were several Liberty Loan songs for the First War, and in 1919 there were three songs for the Victory Loan Campaign. But during the Second War dozens of songs were "ordered" by the Treasury Department, published by the Treasury Department and even copyrighted in the name of H. Morgenthau Jr. Some of these were *Any Bonds Today?*, *Ev'rybody Ev'ry Payday*, *The Axe Is in the Axis*, *Buy a Bond*, *Back the Red*, *White and Blue with Gold*, *I'm Buying a Bond for My Baby*, and *Back the Attack with War Bonds*.

Songs written during the two wars describe civilian participation, and comparison shows how much more deeply the people at home were involved in the Second War than they were in the First. In the First War songs told about the coal shortage: *Keep Cool! the Country's Saving Fuel*; *the Devil Has Bought Up*

All the Coal. The food shortage was noted: *Hoe Your Little Bit in Your Own Back Yard*, and *I'll Do without Meat, I'll Do without Wheat.* And knitting for the soldiers inspired *Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers*, *Each Stitch Is a Thought of You, Dear*, and *I'm Knitting a Rosary.*

During the Second War an entire literature of songs was required to inform civilians of their responsibilities. Air raid protection: *Shake Hands with Your Air Raid Warden*, *When You Hear the Sirens Blow*, *Lose the Blackout Blues*, *Block out the Blackout with the Lovelight in Your Eyes.* Saving of scrap: *Throw Your Little Scrap into the Big Scrap*, and *Junk Ain't Junk No More.* Women in war plants: *Rosie the Riveter.* Gasoline and tire shortages: *That Old Car of Mine*, *The Horse and Buggy Days Are Here Again*, and *The Old Gray Mare Is Back Where She Used to Be.* Many songs were written about victory gardens, rationing, priorities, and war plants.

Not all of these songs were commercial successes, but what is important is that they were written and published. They evidence what someone thought was a need.

THE SONGS that soldiers themselves sing are generally quite different from the songs

that are sung about them by the home folks. This was true in the First as well as in the Second War. But when we compare the soldier songs of the two wars we find some interesting similarities and differences.

All soldiers like to sing either sentimental or dirty songs about women; and all soldiers like to sing dirty songs about their sergeants and captains. But compare *Madelon*, *Mademoiselle from Armentieres*, and *K-K-Katy* — the big songs of the First War — with *Lili Marlene* (German), *Waltzing Matilda* (Australian), and *Dirty Gertie from Bizerte.* The songs of the First War had a joyousness about them that was largely lacking in the soldier songs of the Second. And, if possible, the dirty songs were dirtier in the Second War than in the First. One of the best collections of soldier songs of the Second War* carries this sorrowful foot-note to the salty ballad *Four-F Charlie*: "This noble song, one of the great favorites of our men, has many amusing but unfortunately unprintable verses."

The explanation, of course, lies in the nature of the two wars. The First War was a Crusade to make the world safe for democracy — a war to end all

* GI Songs, edited by Edgar A. Palmer, New York 1944. Sheridan House.

wars. Men's hopes for their world spanned high. We Americans were new to the world war business. But the Second War was something we got caught in; it was not a crusade, just a messy business in which a man found himself involved, and we Americans were getting older. Even when we sang a sentimental song during the Second War like *The White Cliffs of Dover* — about how there would never be another war and the world would some day be free — we sang it plaintively.

And this brings us to the most sobering comparison between the First War, the Second War — and what may be the Third War. During the First War our songs were written spontaneously by composers who felt much of what they wrote. There was no radio, and a song had to be good in order to sell. So look how many of the songs have lived. There are *twelve*!

Goodbye Broadway, Hello France; Over There; Dear Old Pal of Mine; Mademoiselle from Armentieres; Just a Baby's Prayer at Twilight; Katy; Keep the Home Fires Burning; Pack Up your Troubles; Roses of Picardy; Till We Meet Again; Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning; and Tipperary.

These are songs which most Americans know and can sing.

But look at the list for the Second War when ten times as many songs were written and when radio carried them constantly: *White Christmas; The Last Time I Saw Paris; Don't Sit under the Apple Tree; My Sister and I; Bell Bottom Trousers; The White Cliffs; There'll Always Be an England; Der Fuehrer's Face; Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer; Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition; Waltzing Matilda; Lili Marlene*; and a song written a quarter-century ago, *God Bless America*.

There are good songs in this second list, but most of the songs in the first list will endure far longer than will those in the second.

TIN-PAN ALLEY tried to turn out songs that would make the Second War memorable in music. The song writers organized a Music War Committee and met regularly with military and civilian experts. Songs were written to cover every activity, and when one general told the committee "my men want to sing about women," one of the writers promptly produced *We Want to Sing about Women*.

I think perhaps we were all a little too self-conscious in our desire to produce good songs for the Second War. Perhaps sincere lyric expression cannot be pro-

duced by mass methods or at the direction of government. It is even possible that we can't write the good songs about mechanized war that we could write about wars in which men were more important.

At the beginning of the First War we Americans were something like a football crowd. Our song writers wrote "pep" songs about that war, many of them actually joyous and exuberant. By the time of the Second War we were older and sadder, but since we had to fight a war we thought it might help to sing. So we wrote sad ballads

instead of the former pep songs.

Now, after seven months of the Korean War, Tin-Pan Alley hasn't been able to produce a single song. If there must be a Third War, I suppose that we can organize again, send a committee of writers to Washington, and grimly set about the production of songs while we produce tanks and atom bombs. I suppose we'll have to produce a special song for the atomic bombardiers; and maybe there'll be some writers who can catch the spirit of it. But I'm afraid that the songs will only be grimmer and dirtier.

John Tasker Howard is one of this country's leading music critics, to say nothing of being a lecturer and the composer of some 150 songs, orchestral pieces, and piano and choral works. He is the author of Contemporary Composers, and The World's Great Operas.

COSMOPOLITAN VANCOUVER

BY STEWART HOLBROOK



CANADA'S THIRD CITY is so new that many a resident remembers the arrival of the first train of cars which rolled in on Queen Victoria's birthday in 1887. The collection of log cabins and board shacks had incorporated itself only a year before, and meanwhile had been completely wiped out by fire and partially rebuilt. The town could muster less than two thousand persons to greet the first transcontinental train of the Canadian Pacific Railway to reach the West Coast.

The site was chosen for the railroad's terminus by the general manager of the line, who named it for Captain George Vancouver, the English explorer. It might well have been named for the railroadman himself, who was born William Cornelius Van Horne in Illinois. He chose the spot from among many possibilities and said, like

Brigham Young on another occasion, "This is the place." The great Mormon leader chose no better than the genius of the Canadian Pacific. No city on earth has a more beautiful setting than Vancouver, British Columbia.

On a promontory of the mainland, surrounded by water. Cutting through the heart of town is the ebb and flow of tides in False Creek. Across the harbor to the north and the northeast are great and jagged white-capped mountains. Within five minutes' ride from the city center are the thousand acres of Stanley Park, where stand noble old firs and cedars that were huge trees as long ago as Captain Vancouver's time. I can think of no other city with such a superb primitive area so close to its postoffice as Vancouver's.

Local boosters speak of Van-

couver's population as four hundred thousand. Skeptical as one properly should be of figures from such sources, I'm inclined to believe that the next census, due in 1951, will bear out Vancouver's claim. But neither the population growth nor the city's architecture, which leaves much to be desired, is what sets Vancouver apart. It is something else. No writer I know of has yet got it down in words. No canvas I've seen quite catches it. Perhaps it just isn't to be reduced to prose or picture: Vancouver glitters in the northern sunlight with a sparkle all its own. Mist, and in season considerable downright fog, hangs mysteriously over it. Even its winter gloom, which settles down for weeks on end, is of a special sort, a majestic melancholy that tempers the soul with a peace that is not sadness.

Whether Vancouver, as some Canadians and Englishmen charge, is "too American," or as many Americans find it, "charmingly British," is a matter of opinion. It is probably a composite of the two civilizations, with distinct Oriental traces. It is at least cosmopolitan. Along Granville street one may see fine turbaned Sikhs; wealthy Chinese; kilted Seaforth Highlanders; dowagers with boned lace collars; and the

monkey fur and other vulgarities of Southern California. At rare intervals, too, one may see a group of Dukhobors from Brilliant, in the Interior — the men bearded, the women many-petticoated and wearing babushkas. In clubs, and otherwise "in chambers" all over town, one also finds a species peculiar to British Columbia — the long-retired army colonels who have eaten chutney at Jodhpur and retain an inordinate appetite for free liquor. (Incidentally, their conversation is commonly well worth the expense incurred.) One may also see a few of the boys fresh from the creeks and the logging camps, on holiday, but these lads do not often get above the intersection of Carroll street on Hastings, where Vancouver's notable Skidroad ends.

Fringing the city, and occasionally in the middle of it, are the sawmills representative of British Columbia's first industry. Down through the Narrows, and sometimes whipped apart by the swift and powerful tides, come the enormous rafts of logs, some of them from as far north as the Queen Charlotte Isles, to be made into lumber and plywood and into shingles, the latter of which are said to cover the whole world. Along the docks are big warehouses,

and the piers of scores of ship lines large and small, dominated by those of the Canadian Pacific. There are no roads running north from Vancouver; everybody and his goods travel by ship. The big *Empress* ships shuttle between here and the Orient and Australia.

NO CITY of Canada is more a child of the Canadian Pacific Railway than Vancouver. This concern is even more astonishing than the hoary Hudson's Bay Company. The CP is much more than a railroad. It is a sometimes benevolent and always efficient institution that owns vast telegraph and cable systems, telephone companies, mines and timber, agricultural lands, magnificent hotels and resorts. Its handsome *Empress* ships go all over the world. Its airlines will take you into the sub-Arctic bush, or to Hong Kong, New Zealand, and Fiji.

But back in 1881, when young Van Horne left his superintendent's job with the Milwaukee railroad to take charge of pushing the CP tracks across the plains and the mountains, the road was more an incorporated wish than a working railroad. Bedeviled by politics and vacillating direction, it had come into being for the purpose of binding together the immense

territory that was called, on paper, the Dominion of Canada. The proposed line must reach and pass the Rockies, too, for the Crown colony of British Columbia had been wavering. Indeed, a vote by its primitive Parliament had indicated a strong though not a majority desire to join the United States. To make certain that no such hideous thing happened, Sir John A. MacDonald, Canada's prime minister, promised British Columbia a railroad to connect it with the rest of the Dominion.

Sir William Van Horne (he was knighted by the Queen in 1894) was just the man to build such a railroad. There is no room here even to indicate the difficulties he faced. But in six years from the day he took charge, the first transcontinental train reached the shacks of Vancouver. Many think that our own Union Pacific story, epic though it is, was no greater than the epic of the Canadian line.

Van Horne had been urged, and pressure was brought to bear on him, to make the terminal Victoria, on Vancouver Island. It was pointed out that the tracks could be laid across the narrow tidewater at Bute Inlet to reach the Island, thence south to Victoria, seat of pro-

vincial government and then the largest city. Instead, and to the horror of all Islanders, Van Horne chose the site elsewhere and named it Vancouver. Incidentally, Sir William was an amateur artist of considerable talent. He painted in oils and painted well in the academic tradition. I like to think that he saw Vancouver's site no less as an artist than as a peerless railroadman.

Two years after the arrival of the first Canadian Pacific trans-continental train, Vancouver's population had risen from a doubtful two thousand to a positive 10,500. Its growth from then to now has been gradual and continuous. It passed Victoria decades ago.

FOR THE first thirty-five years of Vancouver's life, its traffic, like that in Victoria, followed the left-hand rule hallowed by centuries of usage in old England, but in effect nowhere else in the Dominion except on Prince Edward Island, on the Atlantic coast. It looked odd to Americans, and to most Canadians, to see horse-drawn vehicles, automobiles, and even the specially built streetcars, operating on the "wrong" side. After steadily growing pressure over the years, the Province of British Columbia at last voted to change

the rule-of-the-road to conform with the keep-right method common to the United States and to virtually all other parts of Canada. The time for the change was set as January 1, 1921.

I was then a resident of British Columbia, and can readily recall the uproar as the day drew near. The letter columns of the *Daily Province* were clogged with bitter protests, and denunciations from diehards of this adoption of "Yankee notions." Various societies, associations and clubs got horribly steamed up. They held mass meetings and passed resolutions roundly damning the whole business as the work of Satan in star-spangled tights. What was good enough in the times of Gladstone, in the times of Pitt — aye, in the times of Beowulf — was good enough for British Columbia in the twentieth century. It was freely prophesied that collisions and wrecks would strew the streets and highways with carnage beside which the fields of Bala-klava were as nothing. The awesome day came and passed, traffic moved on the right, and the press reported that not one accident occurred that could have been charged to the change.

Whether Vancouver's tendency since that time has been toward even more "American-

ization" or less is debatable. No conscious effort is made, as in Victoria, to preserve anything that the swarming American tourists might consider quaint. Its largest hotel, run jointly by the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National railroads, operates strictly on a comfort and luxury basis. Its fine stores, paced by the ever-present Eaton's, Birks', and the Hudson's Bay Company, remind one more than of anything else of fine stores in the United States. Its movie theaters offer the usual brand of Hollywood tripe, except on Sundays when they and almost everything else in town is shut tight.

Americans in Vancouver are a tiny minority and probably do not exceed twenty thousand. Native Canadians (all provinces) number at least 225,000. The British Isles contribute around eighty-five thousand. Europeans approximate thirty-five thousand, about half of whom are Scandinavian. There are perhaps six thousand Chinese, and 3,500 Japanese.

The two main business streets, Granville and Hastings, honor two famous men of the Empire's greatest days. A fine residential district, Shaughnessy Heights, honors a former president of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The glory of Stanley

Park commemorates one of Canada's governor-generals. Vestigial remains of Old Country life are to be seen in the quiet bowlers-on-the-green and even quieter cricket matches. (Professional baseball, however, attracts the largest crowds.)

Even the smallest stores stock the finest jams and marmalades imaginable, both native and Old-Country-made. Kippers, even bloaters, are standard items on most breakfast menus. Scotch is the most popular drink, with Canadian whiskies second. Much domestic and imported ale is quaffed in the beer parlors. There are no saloons. The liquor business is under provincial government control.

The University of British Columbia holds forth on some five hundred wonderful acres on Point Grey, perhaps as happily a situated campus as one could find. Thirty years ago, when I first saw it, the place displayed one small structure in the midst of the surrounding forest. Its current enrollment is nearly nine thousand.

Vancouver has its Rotary, Kiwanis, Gyro, Lions and Active clubs. What the city needs, however, is some outfit that will harass the city fathers and taxpayers into giving Vancouver a public library worthy of the town. The present institution,

much the same as it was a third of a century ago, would be no credit to a city half Vancouver's size. Its hard-worked staff does wonders with the well-worn books and the dreadful quarters which go by the name of Public Library, but even they cannot commit the miracle of making a truly metropolitan institution from a jerkwater collection of books housed in a long outdated hovel.

The Vancouver press includes three dailies, all of which look more like American than English newspapers. The last of the Old Country city editors, who objected to the appearance of any verb in a headline, have gone. And none too soon, for they would suffer most horribly to see the current banner head-

lines, of Second Coming size, in red ink, on bright green paper, such as are common in Vancouver today.

Many Canadians, with no vested interest in the matter, say that Vancouver will before long pass Toronto to become the second city in all Canada. I'm inclined to agree. But whether or not it does, a majority of Vancouver's people will no doubt rest content. No other city people in North America can see more beauty from their doorsteps. When they have achieved some decent civic age, and get around to putting up cast-iron statues in the park, let them honor Sir William, who possessed both the eye of an artist and the instincts of a superior man of business.



Draughts of Old Bourbon

An Italian Report on Mussolini's Last Night

One of our Italian correspondents has sent us this addition to the story of Mussolini's last hours:

The aging Duce and his young mistress, Claretta Petacci, were executed beside a narrow hillside road at a place called Mezzegra which beautifully overlooks Lake Como. I saw the pockmarks made by the machine-gun slugs on the stone fence posts, and I talked with one of the two young peasants who guarded the couple on their last night — April 27, 1945.

The youth — a partisan — showed me some personal belongings of Claretta: a piece of blue, hand-painted, flowered

silk; tiny spools of beige thread; a tortoise shell case with lavender-scented powder; and a cake of green soap made in England. He said that he had sold in Switzerland his most prized souvenir: a gold medal with a soft-faced madonna.

On their last night Mussolini and Claretta were lodged in the bedroom of a peasant couple named de Maria. The two partisan boys stood guard just outside the door which was held ajar.

During the night, the boy who had been one of the guards told me, Mussolini turned off the light in the bedroom, and shortly thereafter the two guards heard sounds which caused them to look at each other. The two young guards conferred excitedly

and decided that it was improper for the Fascist beast to have such privacy on his last night. So the guards jerked open the door, turned on the light, beat their rifle butts on the floor, and announced loudly that such conduct would not be tolerated.

Then my informant made a shameful confession for a young Communist. He said that while Claretta lay on her back, covering herself with a sheet, a tired, haggard, almost pathetic old Mussolini, clad only in an undershirt, crawled off the bed, and walked outside the door with his two young guards. There he talked to them like a hurt father. Could they not, he asked, understand the sorrow and loneliness of a man his age on what was perhaps his last night?

The two young partisans, perhaps being Italians first and then Communists, listened to the old man's plea, then allowed him to go back into the room, close the door, turn off the light, and spend the rest of the night without interruption. Next day, at dawn, they shot him.

Mr. Huie Plays Host to an Emperor

It isn't every day that an emperor visits me. Down in Maryland I live in that house by the

side of the road and folks with all sorts of information drop in. Maybe it's a lady who has borne a Governor's child; or a statesman with the latest on General Vaughan; or a minute man who has spied a Communist lurking near the atom bomb. They're all welcome if they don't spit on the floor. My wife objects to that.

Visitors are never much trouble at our place. We always have pots of turnip greens and hopping-john; and since we make our own whiskey, there's a jug or so on the sideboard. So most anybody who is reasonably washed and who has something on his chest is invited to sit, eat, drink, prop up his feet, and expound.

As I say, however, it isn't often that an emperor comes along. Especially an imperial emperor. But the emperor was in Washington and some fool editor wanted me to do a piece about him, so the emperor came out for breakfast — and to tell me about the empire. His empire is the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and he is Imperial Emperor, Dr. William Lycurgus Spinks, of the Imperial Palace, Only-God-and-the-Klan-Knows-Where in Alabama or Georgia.

Well, the emperor looks like a man named Lycurgus. That early in the day, of course, he was not wearing the imperial vestments, only a brown-striped suit. His

wide-brimmed white hat sat squarely atop his shock of white hair which he bobs off in the back to look like George Washington or the Dean of Canterbury. His high-topped shoes were tight-laced and shined, and though he carried a heavy stick he walked erect and imperial.

My wife and I decided he didn't look quite as imperial as Cotton Tawm Heflin. He lacks Tawm's stature and white, brocaded vest. He resembles Boss Crump, the old Memphis Red Snapper, but he is paunchier. His face has that soft, slick, pasty sheen of men who have lived, not by working, but by deluding simpler men. He showed a mouthful of gold teeth as he pumped our hands.

"Good mawning, Brother Bill," he boomed. "Great mawning fer the Lord's folks, ain't it?"

"Shore is, Brother Lycurgus," I said. "Come in — and God smite the Yankees!"

"Amen, Brother."

Naturally we brothered one another from the start since the emperor is a Baptist preacher and all us shoutin', foot-washin' Baptists brother the preacher. Then, too, like all Southerners, we're kinfolks. His great-great-great-granddaddy settled in the forks of the Alabama River, and my great-great-great-great-

granddaddy settled in the bend of the Tennessee. His granddaddy lost a leg at Shiloh and took the Klan oath in a Tennessee cave from the first Imperial Emperor — take off yore hat, suh — Nathan Bedford Forrest. My great-granddaddy lost a leg at Chickamauga and took the oath in the same cave.

Hell, me and the emperor were on our second plate of grits-and-gravy before we got all our kinship straightened out. Then he turned to me and said: "Son, you're a natural-born Southern gentleman. Southern gentlemen ain't made; they're born! And you're natural-born!"

We all chuckled heartily.

I asked him what he thought of Washington and he replied: "Brother Bill, there's more damn fools in Washington than there is fiddlers in hell. And a lot of 'em is just as red as Joe Stalin's boots. Ain't it the truth?"

"It's the Lord's own truth, suh," I said.

We discussed several of our Southern brothers who are in Congress, particularly those from Alabama and Mississippi. His brow furrowed when he asked me:

"Brother Bill, how's Brother Hugo getting 'long? He use to speak in the Klaverns with the tongue o' angels."

"Well, Brother Lycurgus," I

replied, "I'm afraid Brother Hugo's backslid. Since he's been on the Supreme Court he's got pretty far away from his raising."

"Ain't steadfast in the faith, is he?"

"No, suh. Not in any faith. Best way to understand him is to remember what an old reporter who had known him all his life said about him. In the argument after he was named to the Court this reporter said: 'Well, boys, I'll say this for him. When it becomes fashionable to be conservative again, old Hugo'll be the most reactionary sonofabitch on that bench!'"

"Yeah, that's Brother Hugo. Wouldn't do to pattern by."

When the emperor and I retired to the library, there was a momentary crisis over a cuspidor. The emperor is a cigar chewer; he smokes, chews, spits, and talks in one continuing operation; and since I've quit chewing and my wife's quit dipping we don't have a decent gobboon around the place. I ducked back to the kitchen and said: "Oh, hell, the emperor's gotta have something to spit in." My wife looked appalled, but being an old Campfire Girl she quickly emptied a Maxwell House coffee can, and I spread a copy of the *Washington Post*

on the floor, put the can in the middle of the paper, and the situation was saved.

"Well, Brother Bill," the emperor began, "the time has come when real, red-blooded Americans have got to bare their breasts to the wind and save this country again. The Enemy is within our gates, and we've got to meet him just as our granddaddies did. And our great-granddaddies."

For an hour then the emperor gave me the old Klan seven-and-six. He was on his feet and shouting when he got to: "Nobody can tell me that the Hand o' God wasn't on General Forrest that night in the cave in Tennessee when him and those great men met and formed *in blood* the Ku Klux Klan of America! Now we've got to reform and bare our breasts to the wind and wipe out this red Communism of Joe Stalin!"

I asked the emperor what about Drew Pearson and his crusade against the Klan.

"That rascal's the best friend we got," he said. "Every time he opens his lying mouth about the Klan we get more donations. If he ever stops jumping on us we'll have to pay him to start again. For everybody knows what he is; we've got the word of two Presidents of the United States."

Since the emperor had declared that the great new Cause for the Klan was to fight Communism, I asked him to explain his understanding of Communism. When he thought of Communism what did he see in his mind?

He thought for a moment, chewed on his disintegrating cigar, spat, then answered:

"Brother Bill, I see carpetbaggers. Hunderds of 'em. Rascals and scalawags stealing the heart out of America. I see drunk niggers in our state houses again — all of 'em yelling and bowing down to One Old Big Carpetbagger. I see soldiers coming in the night to steal the corn out of the cribs and the meat out of the smokehouses. And I see the real, red-blooded Americans broke and hounded and flogged and hungry and jailed and killed. That's what I see when I think of Communism, and that's what I want the Klan to fight."

The emperor has been preaching against the New Deal since 1935. When I asked him why, he gave me this explanation:

"I hate it. I hate everything about it. They been selling out America; they been putting the wrong kind of folks on guard. And, Brother Bill, I guess I'm against it, too, because deep down in my heart I believe that

the man with the longest pole should get the most persimmons."

While I was driving the emperor to the railroad station, he told me something of his life. It hasn't been easy. He's sixty-five. Little churches and big debts. The depression cost him his farm, and in 1936 a Mississippi industrialist hired him to preach against the New Deal. That Fall he was sent to New York with instructions only to wait at the McAlpin Hotel until further instructions.

At the McAlpin there occurred one of those sad little dramas of the period when a few wealthy men thought they could beat Roosevelt with preachers. Gerald L. K. Smith was having his Park Avenue run at the time, and in due time a lawyer furtively carrying the satchel came to see Brother Lycurgus. They bought him two Chrysler automobiles during the next six years and doled out enough cash to keep him rolling across the country thundering to every little group which could listen but couldn't hire a speaker.

The tour ended when a patron died — and the emperor now is selling the Klan.

I told the emperor that I, too, was in the lecture business, but that I was buying a farm in Maryland and I hoped I could

spend more time at home and quit traveling so much.

"Brother Bill," he said — and there was sadness in his voice — "I'm glad you can do that. I'm getting a little old and tired, and sometimes I wish I could afford to settle down at home. But I can't afford it — and I guess it's a good thing I can't. Somebody's got to keep his breast bared to the wind; somebody's got to keep fighting to save this country."

When I got back home my wife had all the windows open, and was using three bottles of Air Wick. She hates cigar smoke.

Disposal Directions for Deceased Bureaucrats

With patriots again proliferating in the Pentagon, the great Air Force directive of the Second War has been re-issued:

Subject: Death of Office
Workers

To: All Supervisors

It has been brought to the attention of this office that many people in the office are dying and refusing to fall after they are dead.

THIS MUST STOP!

After February 1, 1951, any person caught sitting up after he has died will be cut off the payroll immediately, except where

it can be definitely proved that worker is being supported by typewriter or other suitable equipment properly stamped U. S. GOVERNMENT. For further information the following rules will be observed in all cases of this kind in the future:

1. If, after several hours, it is noted that worker has not moved nor changed position, the supervisor in charge will investigate, in an apologetic manner, of course, being careful not to arouse the ire of the person being investigated. If upon investigation it is shown that the person is dead and still sitting without the support of the proper equipment, the following procedure must be carried out.
2. Fill out Special Form ES-2000 (15 copies); mail the first three copies to this office, together with the tops of three first-aid kits (address must be be plainly written inside). Copies 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 will be forwarded to the messenger boy in the office concerned. When proper lavatory facilities are not available, copies 9, 10, 11, and 12 may be used in lieu of paper designated for such purposes. Copies 13, 14 and 15 must be sent somewhere.
3. If investigation proves that

person died and is still sitting without the support of proper tools or equipment, fill out the Form ES-2000 and forward to his office supervisor to push over the body and complete the case.

4. In all cases where office workers have died and have not fallen, it will be necessary to complete Form ES-4000, together with sworn statements of dead man, covering his history for the past ten years. If dead man cannot write, signature must be witnessed by two persons, giving full names and addresses. To complete case, fill out all forms available and mail copies all over hell.

Jonathan Longbow
Lt. Col., Air Corps
Chief, Air Force Section

* * *

After his sermon on a fine Sunday morning, a preacher was standing at the door shaking hands with his flock. A particularly old but sunny-faced gentleman approached and pumped the preacher's hand.

"And how are you feeling, my good man?" the preacher asked.

"Wonderful, preacher," was the reply. "I'm ninety-five years

old; my digestion's good; I'm at peace; and I ain't got a enemy in the world."

"You are to be congratulated," the preacher said. "But how is it that you have made such peace; how is it that you haven't an enemy in the world?"

The old man hitched up his pants and replied: "Preacher, if you'll pardon my language, I outlived every one of the rascals."

* * *

A stranger, passing through a small Georgia town, stopped to buy a hat. He asked a farmer to direct him to a haberdasher.

"Uh what?" the farmer asked.

"A haberdasher."

The farmer reflected a moment, then turned to the stranger. "Mistah," he said, "does that mean you want a drink or that you want a woman?"

* * *

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